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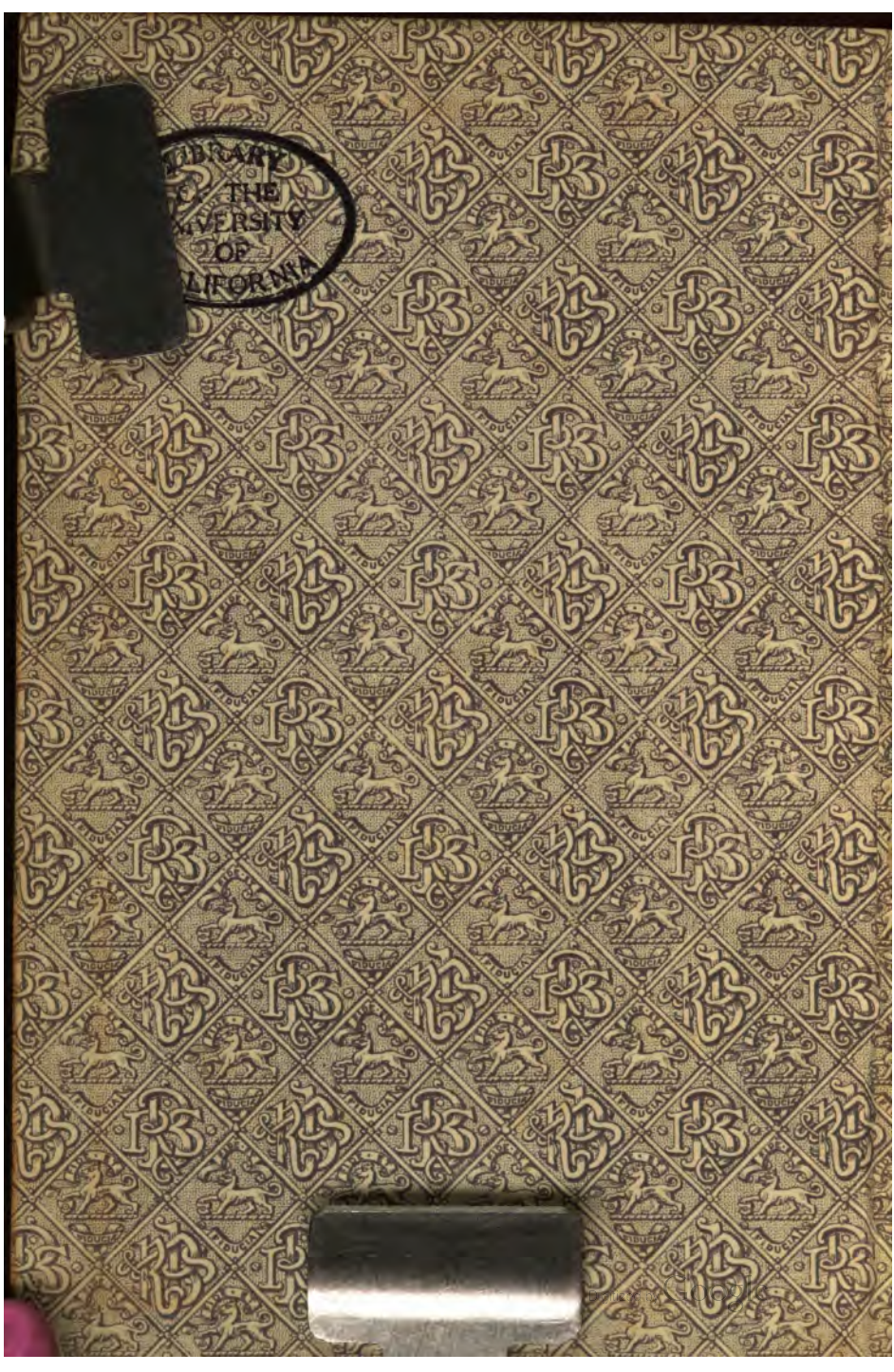
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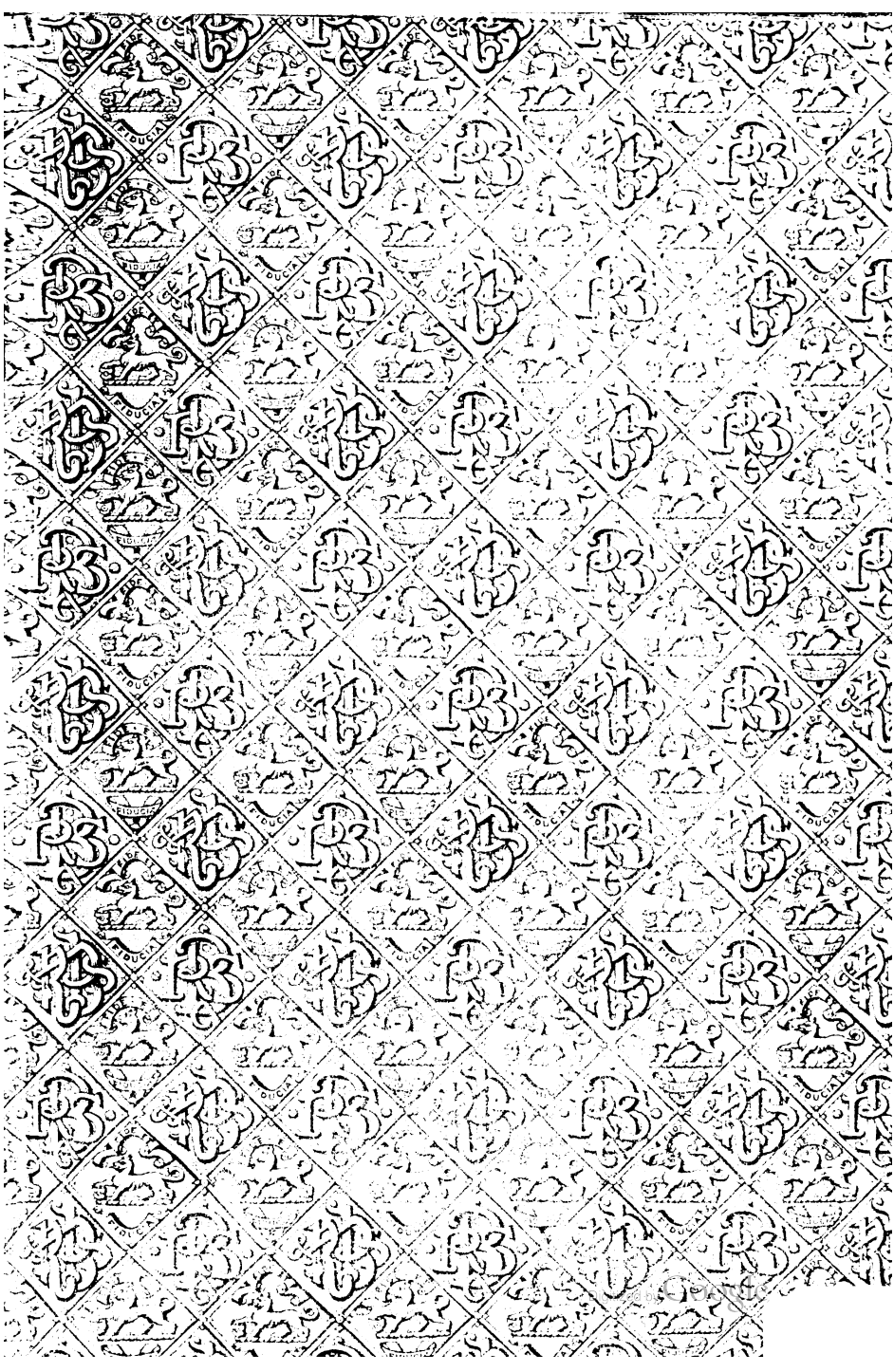

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# WOMEN OF LETTERS.



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MARGARET,

Duchess of Newcastle.

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London Richard Bentley and Son 1894

# *Women of Letters.*

BY

*Gertrude Townshend Mayer.*

In Two Volumes.

Vol. I.

London:

Richard Bentley & Son,

Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.

1894.

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# PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following papers, revised and reprinted—with, in most cases, considerable additions—from *Temple Bar* (1887–1894), have no pretensions to be critical studies of the writings of any of the noticeable women of whom they treat. Their aim is only to give some idea of the lives and characters of the women themselves, mainly in their own words, supplemented by the recollections of their contemporaries; thus offering the essence of many volumes of memoirs and correspondence to readers who, in the hurry of the present day, cannot find time to consult the original works.

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# WOMEN OF LETTERS.

## MARGARET, DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE; "LAMB'S DUCHESS."

"THE whole story of this lady is a romance, and all she does is romantic," wrote Pepys of the subject of this paper, whom some of her contemporaries irreverently styled "Mad Madge of Newcastle," while later critics thought so highly of her that, in "A Vision of Female Poets," * Shakespeare and Milton are represented as respectfully helping her to alight from her Pegasus. The imputation of insanity probably troubled the Duchess but little; she would console herself with the reflection that "great wits are sure to madness near allied;" and if, as some of her biographers assert, her devoted loyalty to her husband, in the extremely disloyal Court of Charles II., earned her

* "Connoisseur," vol. ii. p. 265, edit. 1774.



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the nickname of "Mad Madge," it becomes a title of honour.

There is no indication of madness in the laurel-crowned and graceful portrait prefixed to her "Description of a New World;" simply robed, reelining easily in her chair, and absorbed in reflection, she looks an ideal young Muse—grave, calm, with firmly closed lips, rounded cheeks and chin, wavy hair flowing over a beautiful throat, and large, dark, earnest eyes. The engraving, published in 1799 by Harding, is very fine. It is obviously taken from the large family group representing the Duchess with the Duke and his children, which forms the frontispiece to "Nature's Picture drawn by Fancie's Pencil."

The writings of the Duchess *in extenso* by no means commend themselves to a busy and practical age, but such of them as record her own and her husband's experiences can never lose their interest; while shrewd observations and poetic fancies are mingled with even her wildest speculations. Two comparatively recent editors have laid very judicious selections from her folios before the public,* but there are still good gleanings left

* "Lives of William Cavendishe, Duke of Newcastle, and his Wife," edited by M. A. Lower, 1856; and "The Cavalier and his Lady" (Golden Treasury Series), edited by Edward Jenkins, which does not give the life of the Duke, but selections from the works of

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for those who refer to the originals, though it must be admitted that a great deal of chaff has to be winnowed away before the precious grain is discovered.

Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Lucas, was born at St. John's, near Colchester. She does not give the year, but it is supposed to have been about 1624. She was the youngest of eight children, of whom she writes, "there was not any one crooked nor anyways deformed, neither were they dwarfish nor of giant-like stature, but every way proportionable, well-featured, clear complexions, brown hair, sound teeth, plain speeches, tunable voices—I mean not so much to sing, as in speaking."

Sir Thomas Lucas died when Margaret was an infant, and she only knew him by reputation as a gallant and unfortunate gentleman ("which title," she says, "is given and grounded by merit, not by princes; and 'tis the act of time, not favour"). "One Mr. Brooks" did him an injury: "my father by honour challenged him, with valour fought him, and in justice killed him," on which Lord Cobham, who was the protector, and as some

both, including the autobiography of the Duchess. In the passages quoted in this paper, Mr. Jenkins's plan of modernizing spelling and the use of capital letters has been adopted.

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suppose the brother, of the fallen man, used his influence with Queen Elizabeth to send Sir Thomas into an exile which only terminated with her life. He did not long survive his recall to England on the accession of James I., but his children were brought up under his influence by their admirable mother, whose test of conduct was always what she knew her husband would have approved.

Lady Lucas is described by her daughter with love and veneration:

"Her beauty was beyond the ruin of time. She had a well-favoured loveliness in her face, a pleasing sweetness in her countenance, and a well-tempered complexion, neither too red nor too pale, even to her dying hour, although in years; and by her dying one might think Death was enamoured of her, for he embraced her in a sleep, and so gently as if he were afraid to hurt her."*

After the death of Sir Thomas Lucas, his widow "made her house her cloister, enclosing herself, as it were, therein, for she seldom went abroad except to church."

Her whole life was devoted to the education of her children, and the careful management of the estates which would ultimately become theirs. The sons of the house, whose education was complete while Margaret was still a child, "loved

* "The Cavalier and his Lady" (Macmillan, 1872), p. 49.

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virtue, endeavoured merit, practised justice, and spoke truth; they were constantly loyal and truly valiant." Both scholars and soldiers from early youth—

"their practice was, when they met together, to exercise themselves with fencing, wrestling, and shooting; for I observed they did seldom hawk or hunt, and very seldom or never dance or play on music, saying it was too effeminate for masculine spirits. Neither had they skill or did use to play, for aught I could hear, at cards or dice or the like games; nor given to any vice, as I did know."

The daughters "were bred virtuously, modestly, civilly, and honourably." Lady Lucas, unlike those mothers of the period who, by the testimony of Lady Jane Grey and others, ruled by fear and punished their shrinking children with "nips and pinches," was both tender and firm:

"My mother," says Margaret, "naturally did strive to please and delight her children, not to cross or torment them, terrifying them with threats or lashing them with slavish whips; instead of threats reason was used to persuade us, and instead of lashes the deformities of vice were discovered, and the graces and virtues were presented to us."

In like manner the wise mother refrained from undue economy, never restricting her children in "honest pleasures and harmless delights," lest, "if she bred us with needy necessity, it might chance to create in us mean thoughts and base actions,

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which she knew my father as well as herself did abhor."

She brought them up "in plenty, not only for necessity, convenience, and decency, but for delight and superfluity . . . as for our garments, my mother did not only delight to see us neat and cleanly, fine and gay, but rich and costly. Maintaining us to the height of her estate, but not beyond it."

So excellent was her management, that, says Margaret—

"although after my father's death the estate was divided between my mother and her sons, paying a sum of money for portions to her daughters either at the day of their marriage or when they should come of age, yet by reason she and her children agreed with a mutual consent, all their affairs were managed so well, as she lived not in a much lower condition than when my father lived, and was never in debt, being rather beforehand with the world, buying all with ready money, not on the score."

For tutors, she says, in singing, dancing, writing, and the like, they had "all sorts of virtuosos," but "rather for formality than benefit," as Lady Lucas thought the formation of her children's characters more important than accomplishments. Their pastimes were "to read, write, work, and walk with each other."

There was such perfect harmony in the family

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at St. John's that even after several of its members were happily married,* they lived with Lady Lucas when she was in the country; and though in London they were "dispersed into several houses of their own, yet for the most part they met every day, feasting each other like Job's children." In winter they made parties to visit the theatres, or drove about London in their coaches "to see the concourse of people, and in the spring time to visit the Spring Garden, Hyde Park, and the like places, and sometimes they would have music and sup in barges upon the water."

"I observed," continues Margaret, "they did seldom make visits, nor ever went abroad with strangers in their company, but only themselves in a flock together, agreeing so well that there seemed but one mind amongst them. And not only my own brothers and sisters agreed so, but my brothers- and sisters-in-law. And their children, although but young, had the like agreeable natures and affectionate dispositions."

The civil war broke up this happy circle. Lady Lucas was forced from her house, says her daughter,

"by reason she and her children were loyal to the King, for which they plundered her and them of all their goods, plate, jewels, money, corn, cattle, and the like—cut down their

* Lord Lucas married the daughter of Sir Christopher Neville; Sir Thomas Lucas, the daughter of Sir John Byron (an ancestor of the poet); the daughters married Sir Peter Killigrew, Sir William Waller, and Sir Edmund Pye.

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woods, pulled down their houses, and sequestered them from their lands and livings. In such misfortunes my mother was of an heroic spirit, in suffering patiently when there was no remedy, and being industrious where she thought she could help. She was of a grave behaviour, and such a majestic grandeur continually hung about her that it would strike a kind of awe into beholders, and command respect from the rudest (I mean the rudest of civilized people—I mean not such people as plundered her and used her cruelly, for they would have pulled God out of Heaven had they had power, as they did Royalty out of his throne)." *

At this time, to the surprise and even grief of her family, Margaret, the youngest, shyest, and most studious (or rather, perhaps, meditative, for she admits that her "study of books was little," though she would walk alone for hours "in a musing, considering, contemplative manner") of them all, announced her wish to join the Queen at Oxford, hearing that she had not the same number of maids of honour as formerly. The romantic and generous spirit of her house prompted this impulse. She had not been attracted by Court gaieties and splendour, but when the throne was shaken her loyalty shone out. She could not fight for the King like her gallant brothers, but she could offer her dutiful service to the Queen, flying in distress from her enemies.

Lady Lucas understood her child, and did not

* "The Cavalier and his Lady" (Macmillan, 1872), pp. 48, 49.

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oppose her resolution, although she let her go with pain. But the brothers and sisters were less easily reconciled, "by reason," says Margaret, "I had never been from home and seldom out of their sight." They feared that her inexperience might lead her to act to her own disadvantage, "which indeed I did," she confesses, "for I was so bashful when out of my mother's, brothers', and sisters' sight, whose presence used to give me confidence, thinking I could not do amiss whilst any one of them were by, for I knew they would gently reform me if I did." This reserve and self-distrust made Margaret, with all her beauty and talent, unpopular in the Queen's circle. She was studying character, observing and pondering, and in her grave young mind reprobating levity and worldliness; and the courtiers who felt those serious eyes upon them tried to avenge themselves by turning her into ridicule. "Being dull," by which she apparently means quiet, "fearful, and bashful," she says she heeded only "what belonged to my loyal duty and my honest reputation . . . insomuch as I was thought a natural fool."

This state of things became so painful to young Mistress Lucas that she soon wished to return to her mother, or to one of her married sisters, Lady Pye, with whom she often lived when in

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London, and whom she "loved with a supernatural affection." But Lady Lucas disapproved of a step which would have looked like caprice or irresolution, and counselled her daughter to remain, "though I put her to more charges than if she had kept me at home, and she maintained me so that I was in a condition rather to lend than to borrow, which courtiers usually are not." In obedience to her mother's advice, Margaret Lucas, instead of returning home, accompanied Henrietta Maria to France, and so decided her own fate, there meeting her future husband.

William Cavendish was born in 1592 (his wife, with her persistent disregard of dates, does not mention the year), and on leaving Cambridge, having been made a Knight of the Bath at sixteen, accompanied Sir William Wotton when sent as Ambassador to the Duke of Savoy. Returning to England, he married Elizabeth Basset of Blore, "by whom was added a great part to his estate." Honours were heaped upon him by King James and his successor, which, however, entailed costly recognition, for when the latter went to Scotland, he was entertained at Welbeck "in such an excess of feasting, as had scarce ever been known in England." Ben Jonson's Masque, "Love's Welcome at Welbeck," was written for this visit, and

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"Love's Welcome at Bolsover" for "a more stupendous entertainment, to the King and Queen, given in the following year, which no man ever after in those days imitated." * The two visits cost the host £20,000.

In 1638 the then Earl of Newcastle was summoned to Court and made Privy Councillor and Governor to the Prince of Wales.

Strong personal regard, combined with the principle of loyalty, attached him to the Stuarts at all costs and hazards; but it is not possible here to follow in detail the series of sacrifices and exertions on behalf of Charles which, from 1641 to 1644, dissipated his fortune and nearly broke his heart. His second wife adds many picturesque touches to her narrative of this period, such as "the dismal sight of the horse of His Majesty's right wing, which, out of a panic fear, had left the field and run away with all the speed they could; and though my lord made them stand once, yet they immediately took themselves to their heels again, and killed even those of their own party that endeavoured to stop them;" and an encounter with a Scots regiment of foot, "in which my lord himself killed three with his page's half-leaden sword, for he had no other left him; and though

* Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion," vol. i. p. 167.

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all the gentlemen in particular offered him their swords, yet my lord refused to take a sword of any of them." *

He was a gallant soldier, and a most zealous and indefatigable servant of the King; but the royal cause was hopeless, and, "transported with passion and despair," according to Clarendon, at the way in which the army he had with such difficulty raised had been "thrown away," he left England after the battle of Marston Moor. His wife had died in 1643, and he was only accompanied by his two sons, his brother Sir Charles Cavendish, and some friends. All the money with which his steward could provide him was ninety pounds, and it is not surprising to learn that on landing at Hamburg he had to dismiss some of his servants and to travel by waggon instead of coach. However, he managed to obtain more money,† with which in the following year he proceeded to Paris, where he immediately "went to tender his humble duty" to Queen Henrietta Maria. There he for the first time met

* "Life of William, Duke of Newcastle," by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, edited by Mark Anthony Lower. (Russell Smith, 1872.) Pages 61–63.

† Partly by pawning his late wife's jewels. He had, as one of the Royalist leaders, been excluded from pardon by the Parliament, and his estates had been confiscated. They were in part restored to him (strange to say) after the return of Charles the Second.

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the young maid of honour, of whose beauty and talents he had heard much from her eldest brother Lord Lucas, his friend and comrade. The Duke —or rather, as he was then, the Marquis—was handsome, with a dignified and noble carriage, and a thoughtful, amiable expression; his reputation for chivalrous and self-sacrificing loyalty had preceded him. His behaviour, says Margaret, was such "that it might be a pattern for all gentlemen. Courtly, civil, easy, and free, without formality or constraint, and yet hath something in it of grandeur, that causes an awful respect towards him." They were mutually attracted at once, and after he had stayed in Paris some little time, "he was pleased," she says simply, "to take some particular notice of me, and express more than an ordinary affection for me, insomuch that he proposed to choose me for his second wife;" and in her autobiographic sketch * she adds—

"Though I did dread marriage, and shunned men's company as much as I could, yet I could not nor had not the power to refuse him, by reason my affections were fixed on him, and he was the only person I ever was in love with. . . . Neither title, wealth, power, nor person, could entice me to love; but my love was honest and honourable, being placed upon merit. Which affection joyed at the fame of

* For the future it seems unnecessary to distinguish between short passages taken from the Lives of the Duke and Duchess. Both are contained in one volume of the "Library of Old Authors."

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his worth, was pleased with delight in his wit, was proud of the respect he used to me, and triumphed in the affection he professed for me. Those affections he hath confirmed to me by a deed of time, sealed by constancy, and assigned by an unalterable decree of his promise; which makes me happy in despite of Fortune's frowns."

And Fortune frowned darkly on the early days of the marriage, for Margaret tells us that her husband, having no estate or means left to maintain himself and his family, "was necessitated to seek for credit, and live upon the courtesy of those that were pleased to trust him. Which though they did for some while, and showed themselves very civil to my lord, yet they grew weary at length." To such straits were the bride and bridegroom then reduced that their steward announced that he was not able to provide a dinner for them, the creditors being resolved to trust them no longer. On this, observes the patient bride, "My lord, being always a great master of his passions, showed himself not in any manner troubled, but in a pleasant manner told me that I must of necessity pawn my clothes to make as much money as would procure a dinner" The poor young wife had to confess that her scanty wardrobe would not answer the purpose, and asked her waiting-maid to pawn "some small toys" which she had given her. This was done,

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and, fortified by the meal, the Marquis presented himself before his creditors, and, "by his civil deportment and persuasive arguments," induced them not only to furnish him with goods, but to lend him money to redeem the pledged "toys." The Marchioness then sent her waiting-maid to England, to ask Lord Lucas to forward her slender dowry, reduced by the losses to which her family had been subjected. Thither also the Marquis despatched his son's tutor, to endeavour to raise funds amongst his friends, but Mr. Benoist effected little, "by reason everybody was so afraid of the Parliament, they durst not relieve him who was counted a traitor for his honest and loyal service to his king and country."

The next attempt to mend the family fortunes made by the Marquis was sending his sons—under the charge of an appropriately named Mr. Loving —to look for some "rich matches" which had been suggested for them in England. But example, apparently, carried more weight with the young men than precept. The father had married a girl young, lovely, but almost portionless; and the sons, although they did not return to France, professed themselves in no hurry to wed the heiresses of whom they went in search.

In the spring of 1648 Henrietta Maria desired

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the Marquis and Marchioness to follow her son to Holland, whither he went with the intention of taking command of the English ships which had revolted against the Parliament; and her Majesty became security for the Marquis's debts to enable him to quit Paris with his suite. "The day we left," writes his wife, artlessly, "the creditors, coming to take farewell of my lord, expressed so great a love and kindness for him, accompanied with so many hearty prayers and wishes, that he could not but prosper on his journey." No doubt the creditors were sincerely anxious for the safe return of the party. One only fears that their benisons may have been alloyed by certain sordid speculations as to future payment in full.

In Spain the travellers had a royal reception. The Governor of Cambray met them at the head of a torch-light procession, offered them the keys of the city, and invited them to an entertainment. This being refused on the ground of fatigue, the governor sent a liberal supply of provisions to their lodgings, and instructed the landlord to make no charge for whatever they might require. "Which extraordinary civilities showed," says the Marchioness, "that he was a right noble Spaniard."

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Arriving at Rotterdam they heard that the Prince had put off to sea, on which the Marquis hired and provisioned a boat to follow him; but his wife being unwilling that he should venture on so uncertain a voyage, "and, as the proverb is, seek a needle in a bottle of hay," he desisted from that design. Two members of the suite, less amenable to persuasion, started in search of the Prince, and were driven on the Scottish coast, to the peril of their lives; only to hear on returning to Holland that Charles was no further off than the Hague, where the Marquis had joined him.

The negotiations carried on there proving fruitless, as usual,* the Marquis, who had again become very short of cash and wished to live in a more private manner, dismissed most of his retinue and set out for Antwerp, where he took the house of "the widow of a famous picture-drawer," no other than Rubens, whose museum the Marquis afterwards purchased for £1000; but this was not until much more prosperous days. On his arrival in Antwerp he "was credited by the citizens for

* "The fleet did not come in," says the Marchioness. And the Royalist projects were set aside on receiving news of the destruction of the Duke of Hamilton's army, and the capitulation of Colchester, after which Margaret's gallant and beloved brother, Sir Charles Lucas, lost his life, being sentenced to death by court-martial, shot in the castle-yard, and buried in St. Giles's Church, Colchester.



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furniture, meat, and drink, and all kinds of necessaries, which certainly was a special blessing of God, he being not only a stranger in that nation, but, to all appearance, a ruined man."

Here the Marquis's chief and favourite occupation was training horses, or "the manage," as his wife calls it. He had eight beautiful creatures altogether—

"in which he took so much delight and pleasure that, though he was then in distress for money, yet he would sooner have tried all other ways than parted with any of them. For I have heard him say that good horses are so dear as not to be valued for money . . . so great a love hath my lord for good horses! And certainly I have observed, and do verily believe, that some of them had also a particular love to my lord; for they seemed to rejoice whensoever he came into the stables, by their trampling action, and the noise they made. Nay, they would go much better in the manage when my lord was by than when he was absent. And when he rode them himself they seemed to take much pleasure and pride in it. Of all horses my lord loved Spanish horses and barbs best, saying that Spanish horses were like princes, and barbs like gentlemen, in their kind."

The Marquis of Newcastle's riding-school became one of the sights of Antwerp, and the citizens may have been to some extent rewarded for their financial forbearance by its fame, and the number of visitors it attracted.

"Not only did foreign princes and distinguished strangers of all nations make a point of visiting the Duke, but His

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Majesty (Charles the Second) and all the royal race," writes the Marchioness, "with the exception of Princess Henriette —that is to say, the Princess Royal, the Duke of York, and the Duke of Gloucester, being met one time in Antwerp, were pleased to accept of a small entertainment at my lord's house, such as his condition was able to afford them . . . and His Majesty did merrily and in jest tell me, 'That he perceived my lord's credit could procure better meat than his own.' . . . These passages I mention only to declare my lord's happiness in his miseries."

The patience of the generous citizens of Antwerp, with regard to a settlement of accounts, showing signs of coming to an end, and money given by the Queen and lent by other friends being exhausted, the Marchioness of Newcastle and her brother-in-law, Sir Charles Cavendish,* went to England, to endeavour to obtain some funds from the Sequestration Committee. They were so ill-provided with money that they had to wait in

* His sister-in-law's description of this excellent man is worth quoting: "He was nobly generous, wisely valiant, naturally civil, honestly kind, truly loving, virtuously temperate. His promise was like a fixed decree, his words were destiny; his life was holy, his disposition mild, his behaviour courteous, his discourse pleasing. He had a ready wit and a spacious knowledge, a settled judgment, a clear understanding, a rational insight. He was learned in all arts and sciences, especially mathematics, and though his tongue preached not moral philosophy yet his life taught it. Indeed, he was such a person that he might have been a pattern for all mankind. He loved my lord his brother with a doting affection, as my lord did him; for whose sake I suppose he was so nobly generous, so carefully kind and respectful to me. . . . I will build his monument of truth though I cannot of marble, and hang my tears as scutcheons on his tomb."

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Southwark while Sir Charles's steward pawned his master's watch to pay for their lodgings. Proceeding then to other apartments in Covent Garden, the Marchioness made application, through Lord Lucas, for the customary share of her husband's estate (then estimated at upwards of £22,000 a year, which would now, according to Mr. Lower, represent at least £150,000 a year) allowed to the "wives of delinquents," but was absolutey refused, on the two grounds that she was married after the sequestration, and that her husband had been "the greatest traitor in England," that is to say, she comments, "the honestest man, because he had been most against them."

In her short autobiography the Marchioness gives some quaint particulars of this visit to England, interspersed as usual with moral reflections and analyses of her own character—

"Being accompanied by my lord's only brother, who was commanded to return, to live therein or lose his estate, over I went. But when I came there I found their hearts as hard as my fortunes, and their natures as cruel as my miseries. For they sold all my lord's estate, and gave me not any part thereof, so that few or no other was so hardly dealt with. Indeed, I did not stand as a beggar at the Parliament door, neither did I haunt the committees, for I never was at any but one as a petitioner in my life, which was at Goldsmiths' Hall, and I received neither gold nor silver from them . . . but I whisperingly spoke to my

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brother to conduct me out of that ungentlemanly place, so without speaking unto them one word, good or bad, I returned unto my lodgings."

There were evidently prototypes of our strong-minded and energetic advocates of women's rights, doubtfully regarded by the more conservative of their sex, in Lady Newcastle's time; for she continues—

"The customs of England are changed as well as the laws, where women become pleaders, attorneys, petitioners, and the like, running about with their several causes, complaining of their several grievances, exclaiming against their several enemies, bragging of their several favours they receive from the powerful. Thus trafficking with idle words brings in false reports and vain discourse. For the truth is, our sex doth nothing but jostle for the pre-eminence of words (I mean not for speaking well but speaking much) as they do for the pre-eminence of place. . . . But if our sex would but well consider, and rationally ponder, they will perceive that it is neither words nor place that can advance them, but worth and merit. Nor can words or place disgrace them, but inconstancy and boldness. For an honest heart, a noble soul, a chaste life, and a true-speaking tongue, is the throne, sceptre, crown, and footstool, that advances them to an honourable renown."

She adds that she was herself naturally too bashful to push her way amongst this jostling crowd of claimants—

"not that my bashfulness is concerned with the qualities (or rank) of the persons, but the number; for were I to enter into a company of Lazaruses I should be as much out of countenance as if they were all Cæsars or Alexanders,

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Cleopatras or Queen Didos. . . . But the best of it is, most commonly it soon vanisheth away, and many times before it can be perceived; . . . and the best remedy I ever found is to persuade myself that all those persons I meet are wise and virtuous. The reason I take to be this; that the wise and virtuous censure least, excuse most, praise best, esteem rightly, judge justly, and speak modestly—where fools and unworthy persons are apt to be bold, rude, uncivil in word and action, forgetting or not well understanding the company they are with."

A year and a half the Marchioness remained in England, a quiet and anxious time, during which her great pleasure, next to visiting her brothers and sisters, was hearing music at the house of Mr. Lawes, the composer, and the friend of Milton. "Else I never stirred out of my lodgings," she says, "and seldom did dress myself, taking no delight to adorn myself since he I only desired to please was absent, although report did dress me in a hundred several fashions." She occupied herself mainly with writings both in prose and verse begun while living abroad, where the Marquis also was engaged on his first work on horsemanship.

Lady Newcastle alludes to her husband's encouragement of her literary pursuits when inscribing to him her "CCXI. Sociable Letters," * to which he prefixed some highly commendatory

* Published in 1664.

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verses. After deprecating some supposed advice to engage in women's customary work, such as "needlework and cooking-work," of which she confesses total ignorance, she adds—

"But your lordship never bade me to work and leave writing, except when you would persuade me to spare so much time from my study as to take the air for my health. The truth is, my lord, I cannot work—I mean such work as ladies use to pass their time withal. . . . But yet I must ask your leave to say that I am not a dunce in all employments, for I understand the keeping of sheep and ordering of a grange indifferently well, although I do not busy myself much with it, by reason my scribbling takes away the most part of my time. Perchance some may say that if my understanding be most of sheep it is a beastly understanding. My answer is, I wish men were as harmless as most beasts are, then surely the world would be more quiet and happy than it is."

In this book her aim is, she says, "under the cover of letters to express the humours of mankind and the actions of man's life by the correspondence of two ladies, which make it not only their chief delight and pastime, but their tie in friendship, to discourse by letters as they would do if they were personally together." She frankly adds that she has chosen this form rather than the dramatic because "I have put forth twenty plays already, which number I thought to be sufficient." The imaginary correspondents write to each other about visiting, dress, study, and

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their friends' affairs in a fashion reminding one of some of the letters in the *Tatler* or *Spectator*. The Marchioness was eminently practical, and did not sympathize with those who hope to win heaven merely by "much speaking."

"As for Lady P. Y.," writes one of the friends, "who you say spends most of her time in prayer, I can hardly believe God, who knows our thoughts, minds, and souls, better than we ourselves, can be pleased with so many words. . . . One act of upright justice or pure charity is better than a book full of prayers. . . . Indeed, every good deed is a prayer, for we do good for God's sake, as being pleasing to Him; a chaste, honest, just, charitable, temperate life is a devout life; and worldly labour is devout, as to be honestly industrious to get, and prudent to thrive, that one may have wherewithal to give." *

Nor did she approve of political women, considering that their influence was entirely mischievous—

"I perceive that the Lady N. P. is an actor in some State design, or at least would be thought so," she writes; "for our sex in this age is ambitious to be State ladies, that they may be thought to be wise women. But let us do what we can we shall prove ourselves fools, for wisdom is an enemy to our sex, or rather our sex is an enemy to wisdom. It is true we are full of designs and plots, and ready to side into factions, but plotting, designing factions belong nothing to wisdom. . . . I wish for the honour of our sex that women could as easily make peace as war, though it is easier to do evil than good, for every fool can make an uproar such as the wisest can hardly settle into order again." †

* "CCXI. Letters," pp. 120, 121. † Ibid., pp. 12, 13.

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This was the book over which Lamb made his quaint lament, when writing of "the two races of men"—"the men who borrow and the men who lend":—

"What moved thee, wayward, spiteful K[emble], to be so importunate to carry off with thee, in spite of tears and adjurations to thee to forbear, the Letters of that princely woman, the thrice noble Margaret Newcastle?—knowing at the time, and knowing that I knew also, thou most assuredly wouldst never turn over one leaf of the illustrious folio,—what but the mere spirit of contradiction, and childish love of getting the better of thy friend. Then, worst cut of all! to transport it with thee to the Gallican land—

'Unworthy land to harbour such a sweetness,
A virtue in which all ennobling thoughts dwell,
Pure thoughts, high thoughts, kind thoughts, her sex's wonder.'

Hadst thou not thy play-books, and books of jests and fancies, about thee, to keep thee merry, even as thou keepest all companies, with thy quips and mirthful tales? Child of the Green-room, it was unkindly done of thee." *

When the second year in England was entered upon the Marchioness grew anxious to rejoin her husband.

"I became very melancholy," she says, "by reason I was from my lord, which made my mind so restless that it did break my sleep and distemper my health. With which, growing impatient of a longer delay, I resolved to return, although I was grieved to leave Sir Charles, he being sick of an ague . . . yet Heaven knows I did not think his life was so near an end, for his doctor had great hopes of his

* "Essays of Elia" (Moxon, 1867), pp. 40, 41.

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perfect recovery. So I made haste to return to my lord, with whom I had rather be as a poor beggar than to be mistress of the world absent from him. Heaven hitherto hath kept us, and though Fortune hath been cross yet we do submit, and are content with what cannot be mended, and are so prepared that the worst of fortunes shall not make us unhappy, however it doth pinch our lives with poverty."

News of the indisposition of the Marquis finally hastened his wife's return to him; his brother intended to accompany her, but his own increasing illness prevented him. Sir Charles Cavendish had compounded for his estates at a heavy cost, and was enabled to assist his brother most generously, but did not long enjoy his own comparative prosperity. Almost the first news which reached the Marchioness after her return to the Continent was that of his death. "An extreme affliction," she says, "both to my lord and myself, for they loved each other entirely. In truth, he was a person of so great worth . . . that not only his friends, but even his enemies did much lament his loss."

Commenting on the pursuits of the Marquis and Marchioness during their residence abroad, Sir Egerton Brydges asks—

"What can be more amiable and virtuous than a resort to the consolations of literature in such a state? After the enjoyment of high rank and splendid fortune, noble is the spirit that will not be broken by the grip of poverty, the ex-

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pulsion from home, and kindred, and friends, and the desertion of the world! Under the gloom of such oppression to create wealth and a kingdom within the mind, shows an intellectual energy which ought not to be defrauded of its praise."

One consolation possessed by the Marquis was his firm belief in the approaching restoration of monarchy in England. "Whensoever," says his wife, "I expressed how little faith I had in it he would gently reprove me, saying I believed least what I desired most, and could never be happy if I endeavoured to exclude all hopes and entertained nothing but doubts and fears."

The hopes were realized in 1660, when the Marquis followed his King to London, so transported with joy at returning to his native country that his first supper at Greenwich "seemed more savoury to him than any meat he had ever tasted, and the noise of some scraping fiddles he thought the pleasantest harmony that ever he had heard." His sons received him with joy, but his poor wife was left in Antwerp "as a pawn for his debts until he could compass money to discharge them . . . and certainly my lord's affection to me was such that it made him very industrious in providing those means."

Soon after she joined him in England the faithful pair, now become Duke and Duchess,

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retired to Welbeck, to discover their actual position, and see what remained to them of their once princely fortune. It was a melancholy survey. They only recovered what the Duke called "the chips of their former estates." The Duke of York restored such portions of the lands as, having been purchased by the regicides, were confiscated at the Restoration and given to him by his brother the King, and they brought in about £730 a year—

"But those which had been alienated by the Duke's sons, or by officers in trust, even when they had acted without his sanction, he could not recover. The Duchess computes that he lost in this way lands worth £50,000, and he was obliged to sell others to the value of £60,000 to pay debts contracted during the war and exile. His woods had been cut down, his houses and farms plundered, and he had lost sixteen years' rents. The total of his losses is estimated by the Duchess to be about £940,000." *

£941,303 she calls it, with commendable minuteness, in her life of the Duke. Their two houses, Welbeck and Bolsover, were much out of repair, nothing being left in them "but some few hangings and pictures which had been saved by the care and industry of the Duke's eldest daughter." Of eight parks only Welbeck remained; the others

* "Dictionary of National Biography." London, 1887. Vol. ix. p. 368.

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were "totally defaced and destroyed, both wood, pales, and deer."

Clipston Park, seven miles in extent, wherein the Duke "had taken much delight formerly, it containing the greatest and tallest timber trees of all the woods he had . . . watered by a pleasant river full of fish and otters," and well stocked with all kinds of game, was laid waste; and, says his wife—

"Although his patience and wisdom is such that I never perceived him sad or discontented for his own losses and misfortunes, yet when he beheld the ruins of that park I observed him troubled, though he did little express it, only saying he had been in hopes it would not have been so much defaced as he found it, there not being one timber tree in it left for shelter. However, he patiently bore what could not be helped, and gave present order for the cutting down of some wood that was left him in a place near adjoining, to re-pale it, and got from several friends deer to stock it. Thus, though his law-suits and other unavoidable expenses were very chargeable to him, yet he ordered his affairs so prudently that by degrees he stocked those lands he keeps for his own use, and in part repaired his manor-houses, Welbeck and Bolsover."

Very quaintly and prettily, with the most perfect faith in, and admiration for, her husband, the Duchess goes on to describe and enumerate his acts of gallantry in war and wisdom in peace, his cheerful sacrifices for his King, his losses, and "his blessings;" amongst which latter she specifies—

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"That he made him happy in his marriage; for his first wife was a very kind, loving, and virtuous lady, and blessed him with dutiful and obedient children, free from vices, noble and generous both in their natures and actions; who did all that lay in their power to support and relieve my lord, their father, in his banishment."

She then speaks of his active life and extreme temperance,* and quotes some of his sayings and opinions, proudly remarking that two at least (on "whether it is possible to make men by art fly as birds do," and "on witchcraft"), uttered in conversation with Hobbes, so pleased that learned philosopher that he included them in his own works. "In a monarchial government," said the Duke, "to be for the King is to be for the Commonwealth, for when head and body are divided, the life of happiness dies, and the soul of peace is departed." He would have had all controversial books written in Latin, "that none but the learned may read them, and that there should be no disputations but in schools;" and emphatically asserted that "no offices or commands should be sold . . . all magistrates, officers, commanders, heads and rulers, in what profession soever, both in Church and

* "He makes but one meal a day, at which he drinks two good glasses of small beer, and a little glass of sack in the middle of his dinner; which glass of sack he also uses in the morning for his breakfast with a morsel of bread. His supper consists of an egg, and a draught of small beer."

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State, should be chosen according to their abilities, wisdom, courage, piety, justice, honesty, and loyalty; and then they'll mind the public good more than their particular interest."

"His comedies," she adds, "sufficiently show his great observation and judgment, for they are composed of three ingredients, viz. wit, humour, and satire; and his chief design in them is to divulge and laugh at the follies of mankind, to persecute vice, and to encourage virtue." No doubt she was right as to his excellent intentions. The ability brought to bear on their execution is more open to question. The Duchess amply supports her statement that "my lord hath an excellent judgment;" though conjugal affection blinds her when she adds, "I may justly call him the best lyric and dramatic poet of this age."

But this is an amiable error, and testifies to the strength of the affection which, having made her, as Sir Egerton Brydges says, "the companion of the Duke's misfortunes, the solace of his exile, the sharer of his poverty,"* led her to over-estimate the value of his works.

After their return to England, when political changes and the Duke's wise management had

* Preface to the edition of her autobiography printed by him at Lee Priory in 1814.

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restored them to affluence, they continued to live principally in the country.

"Age," says Sir Egerton Brydges, "had now made the Duke desirous only of repose; and her Grace, the faithful companion of his fallen fortunes, was little disposed to quit the luxurious quiet of rural grandeur, which was as soothing to her disposition as it was concordant with her duty. To such a pair the noisy and intoxicated joy of a profligate Court would have been a thousand times more painful than all the wants of their late chilling but calm poverty."

Very different is the comment of Walpole. "What a picture of foolish nobility," he exclaims, "was this stately poetic couple, retired to their own little domain, and intoxicating one another with circumstantial flattery on what was of consequence to no mortal but themselves!"* And Pepys, in a fit of extraordinary bitterness (one of his "merry evenings" must have been followed by a more than usually sad morning), calls the Duchess's best known work "the ridiculous history of my Lord Newcastle, wrote by his wife, which shows her to be a mad, conceited, ridiculous woman, and he an ass to suffer her to write what she writes to him and of him."

No doubt the publication of so laudatory a biography as that of the Duke, during its subject's life, had its ludicrous side, and his wife's sketch

* "Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors." By Horace Walpole. Strawberry Hill Press. Vol. ii. p. 9.

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of herself, though she honestly tries to set down her failings as well as her merits, is not without a certain calm self-complacency provocative to the flippant commentator. Historians differ over the career of the Duke * as critics do over the mental calibre of the Duchess. But taken as a whole the biographies are fine studies of fine characters, without which the world would have been poorer.

On their occasional visits to London the Duke and Duchess excited interest and curiosity, not always sympathetic, in all beholders. Evelyn frequently mentions them in his "Diary;" his mother-in-law, Lady Brown, of Sayes Court, had been a friend to Margaret in her early days of attendance on Henrietta Maria,† and she and the Duke took much grateful notice of the Evelyns. On April 27th, 1667, he writes:

"In the afternoon I went again with my wife to the Duchess of Newcastle, who received her in a kind of transport, suitable to her extravagant humour and dress, which was very singular. . . . They received me with great kindness, and I was much pleased with the extraordinary fanciful habit, garb, and discourse of the Duchess."

And on the 30th of the same month—

"To London, to wait on the Duchess of Newcastle (who

* Clarendon describes the Duke as "a most lamentable man, as fit to be a general as to be a bishop," but admits that he "was a very fine gentleman."

† Sir Richard Brown was then English Ambassador in Paris.



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was a mighty pretender to learning, poetry, and philosophy, and had in both published divers books to the 'Royal Society,'" (of which Evelyn was one of the chief promoters), "whither she came in great pomp, and being received by our Lord President at the door of our meeting-room, the mace, etc., carried before him, had several experiments shown to her. I conducted her Grace to her coach and returned home."

Pepys, who seems to have had a spite against the Duchess, for no discoverable reason except that he once or twice grew hot and flustered, and very likely got his wig out of order, "driving hard" to overtake her coach, which was "so crowded upon by other coaches, and a hundred boys and girls looking upon her," that he could not get a satisfactory sight of her "comely countenance," gives an acrid account of this visit:

"After dinner I walked to Arundel House, the way very dusty, where I find very much company in expectation of the Duchess of Newcastle, who had desired to be invited to the Society: and was; after much debate *pro* and *con*, it seems many being against it, and we do believe the town will be full of ballads of it. Anon comes the Duchess with her women attending her, among others the Ferabosco, of whom so much talk is that her lady would bid her show her face and kill the gallants. She is indeed black, and hath good black little eyes, but otherwise a very ordinary woman, I do think, but they say sings well. The Duchess hath been a good, comely woman, but her dress so antic and her deportment so ordinary that I do not like her at all, nor did I hear her say anything that was worth hearing, but that she was full of admiration, all admiration. Several fine

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experiments were shown her of colours, loadstones, microscopes, and of liquors; among others of one that did, while she was there, turn a piece of mutton into pure blood, which was very rare. . . . After they had shown her many experiments, and she cried still she was full of admiration, she departed, being led out and in by several lords that were there."*

He was even more scornfully impatient of what he supposed to be her dramatic efforts, noting on March 30th of the same year—

"To see the silly play of my Lady Newcastle's, called *The Humorous Lovers;* the most silly thing that ever came upon a stage. I was sick to see it, but yet would not but have seen it, that I might the better understand her."†

A little later he repeats that it is—

"The most ridiculous thing that ever was wrote, but yet she and her lord mightily pleased with it, and she at the end made her respects to the players from her box and did give them thanks. There is as much expectation of her coming to Court that so people may come to see her, as if she were the Queen of Sweden."

The Duke pleases this captious critic better as a dramatist:

"My wife and I to the Duke's play-house where we saw *The Feign Innocence; or, Sir Martin Mar-all,* a play made by my Lord Duke of Newcastle, but, as everybody says, corrected by Dryden. It is the most entire piece of mirth, a complete farce from one end to the other, that certainly

* "Diary of Samuel Pepys, Esq., F.R.S." ("Chandos Classics"), pp. 391–393.

† Ibid., p. 380.

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ever was writ. I never laughed so in all my life, and at very good wit, not fooling." *

At Welbeck the Duke established a racecourse, drawing up rules for races to be run every month during six months of the year, and completed his second work on horsemanship,† entitled, "A New Method and Extraordinary Invention to Dress Horses and Work them according to Nature; as also to Perfect Nature by the Subtlety of Art; which was never found out but by the thrice noble, high, and puissant Prince," etc. One might imagine that the Duchess wrote the title-page. She and her husband worked together with perfect sympathy and mutual admiration. Some writers have suggested a touch of satire in the Duke's high-flown panegyrics on his wife, but remembering the tone of the age, and the volume of extravagant laudation called "Letters and Poems in Honour of the Incomparable Princess Margaret,

* *Sir Martin Mar-all* was translated by the Duke from Molière's *L'Étourdi*, and was entered in the *Stationers' Register* in the Duke's name, but published in that of Dryden in 1697. Perhaps Pepys would have thought more leniently of *The Humorous Lovers* had he known that that also was by the Duke!

† Walpole, in his "Royal and Noble Authors," describes the Duke as "a man extremely known from the course of life into which he was forced, and who would soon have been forgotten in the walk of fame which he chose for himself. Yet as an author he is familiar to those who scarce know any other author—from his work on horsemanship."

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Duchess of Newcastle,"—to which Etheredge, Sir Kenelm Digby, and many other contemporary writers contributed,*—and that critics so competent and so far removed from her personal influence as Sir Egerton Brydges and Leigh Hunt owned her "genius," the aspersion on the Duke's good faith seems quite superfluous.

At Welbeck they were surrounded by literary admirers. "The Duke had always been so generous a patron of literary men as to have earned the title of 'our English Mæcenas.' I have heard Mr. Waller say that Newcastle was a great patron to Gassendi and Descartes, as well as to Mr. Hobbes, and that he had dined with them all three at his table in Paris." † After his return to England, Dryden, Shadwell, and Flecknoe, each dedicated plays or poems to the Duke or the Duchess, and dedications in those days were expensive compliments.

The Duchess on her part surrounded herself with a sort of staff of secretaries:

"Being now restored to the sunshine of prosperity, she dedicated her time to writing poems, philosophical discourses, orations, and plays. She was of a generous turn of mind,

* It contains one truly descriptive couplet (p. 172):

"Whene'er she spoke, the winged crew
Of pretty notions straight about her flew."

† Aubrey's "Letters," vol. ii. p. 602.

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and kept a great many young ladies about her person, who occasionally wrote what she dictated. Some of them slept in a room contiguous to that in which her Grace lay, and were ready at the call of her bell, to rise any hour of the night, to write down her conceptions, lest they should escape her memory."*

One of the results of their labours was a romance called "The Blazing World." Recent years have seen many imaginary descriptions not only of this present world as it is to be thousands of years hence, but of mysterious regions in some other planet, or realms wholly governed by electricity, lying beneath the seas or floating in the air. Our Duchess was certainly one of the founders, if not the originator, of this class of literature. One can quite imagine the delight she experienced in inventing a world of her own, where no restraint need be laid on her fancy, and the base limitations of possibility were cast aside. Her narrative begins with charming vagueness: "A merchant, travelling into a foreign country, fell extremely in love with a young lady," and resolved "to steal her away," which he does when she is gathering shells upon the shore. He conveys her to "a little light vessel, not unlike a packet-boat, manned with some few seamen and well victualled"—the Duchess cunningly mixes some homely matter-of-

* "Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland," by Theophilus Cibber, and other hands, vol. ii. p. 164.

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fact in her romance for the relief of literal-minded readers; but Heaven, frowning at his theft, raises a tempest which drives the boat to the North Pole, where every one on board is frozen to death amongst the blocks of ice, except the "young lady." * She is rescued by bear-men and fox-men, who lead her across a plain of ice; after which geese-men and bird-men, and unpleasant persons of a grass-green complexion, conduct her to Paradise, the island seat of the Emperor of the Blazing World, so called because his palace is of gold, and its floors are of diamonds, whilst between every diamond-studded pillar supporting the roof is an arch of the same brilliant stones. Of course the Emperor marries the young lady, and then she begins to educate herself by putting a series of distractingly varied questions to her new subjects—the magpie-men and jackdaw-men ("her professed orators and logicians," says the author, cruelly); the spider-men, her mathematicians; the fly-men and the earth-men—such as whence the saltness of the sea did proceed; whether fishes

* "It was no wonder that they died," says the Duchess, gravely. "They were not only driven to the very end or point of the Pole of this world, but even to another Pole of another world which joined close to it" (obviously she pictured them as two good stout sticks), "so that the cold, having a double strength at the conjunction of those two poles, was insupportable."

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possess the circulation of the blood; how frost is made; whether gold can be manufactured; besides insulting them by a transparent quibble about a supposed relationship between cheese and maggots. They are wonderfully patient. But when she proceeds to theology, they inform her that she must consult the immaterial spirits on such points. She summons them; they appear—"in what shapes or forms I cannot exactly tell," says the Duchess, with a wise discretion—and "after some few compliments passed between them," they discourse on faith and reason; the origin of the world; the days of creation; if matter was fluid at first; whether the devil was within the serpent when he tempted Eve, and so on. This is all very well; but when the Empress, waxing proud of her newly acquired store of knowledge, proclaims her intention of writing a new "Cabbala," and asks for a spiritual scribe, they strike, and tell her she must send for a human soul, for the excellent reason that they themselves cannot write "except they put on a hand or arm." She proposes to send for Aristotle, Plato, or Epicurus, to which the spirits reply that no doubt they were learned men, but—

"'So wedded to their own opinions that they would never have the patience to be scribes.' 'Then,' said she, 'I'll have

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the soul of one of the most famous modern writers, either Galileo, Descartes, or Hobbes.' The spirits say they were fine ingenious writers, but so self-conceited they would scorn to be scribes to a woman. 'But,' said they, 'there's a lady, the Duchess of Newcastle, which, although she is not one of the most learned, eloquent, witty, and ingenious, yet she is a plain and rational writer; the principle of her writings is sense and reason, and she will, without question, be ready to do you all the service she can.'" *

So the Duchess's obliging soul is sent for, and after a spiritual kiss exchanged between the two ladies they set industriously to work, and the result is the "Blazing World"—a wonderful patch-work of sense and nonsense, wild invention and pearls of wisdom. The Duchess's characterization of herself as a "plain and rational" writer is charming.

In "The World's Olio" there are many quaint and graceful thoughts. "Every little fly, and every little pebble, and every little flower," she says, "is a tutor in Nature's school to instruct the understanding. The four elements are the four great volumes wherein lie Nature's works." She strongly advocated temperance. "Every superfluous bit and every superfluous cup is digging a grave to bury life in." †

* "'The Description of a New World, called the Blazing World. Written by the thrice noble, illustrious, and excellent Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle."

† And she practised what she preached. In her autobiography

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She theorizes on all subjects, often very fantastically. As to "the madness of musicians," she is kind enough to admit that—

"it is not *always* pride, bred by the conceit of their rare art and skill, but by the motion of the music, which is swifter than the ordinary motion of the brain, and by that reason distempers it by increasing the motion of the brain to the motion of the fiddle; which puts the brain so out of tune as it is very seldom tuneable again. And as a ship is swallowed by a whirlpit in the sea, so is reason drowned in the whirlpit of the brain." *

The Duchess's poetry, like her prose, is remarkably unequal. Her fairy verses contain exquisite touches, such as the following—

"When I Queen Mab within my fancy viewed,
My thought bowed low, fearing I should be rude.
Kissing her garment thin, which fancy made,
I knelt upon a thought, like one that prayed."

In her "Vision of Sorrow" she says—

"Her hair untied, loose on her shoulders hung,
And every hair with tears like beads was strung."

Her opening address "to her readers," describing whence she drew her inspiration, breathes the tender devotion which glorified all the Duke's accomplishments in her faithful eyes:

she says: "Feasting would agree neither with my humour nor constitution, for my diet is for the most part sparing—as a little boiled chicken or the like. And my drink commonly water."

* "The World's Olio," pp. 199-200.

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"A poet I am neither born nor bred,
But to a witty poet married,
Whose brain is fresh and pleasant as the spring
Where fancies grow and where the muses sing.
There oft I lean my head, and listening, hark,
To catch his words and all his fancies mark.
And from that garden show of beauties take
Whereof a posy I in verse may make.
Thus I, that have no gardens of my own,
There gather flowers that are newly blown." *

Quaintly imaginative are her long dialogues between "Man and Nature;" "The Body and the Mind;" "Earth and Darkness," where Darkness tells the Earth, "I take you in my gentle arms of rest," to sleep "in beds of silence soft;" and "A Bountiful Knight and a Castle ruined in War," where, when the pipes were cut—

"The water, murmuring,
Ran back with grief to tell it to the spring."

But she has the defects of her qualities. She runs riot in similes, which not only weary but often provoke by their fantastic incongruity. Thus, Death is called "the cook of Nature;" the Polar circles are "Nature's bracelets;" the grass makes her stockings; gold and silver mines are her shoes; for her breakfast—

"Life skims the cream of beauty with Time's spoon,
And draws the claret wine of blushes soon!"

* "Poems and Fancies." By the Rt. Hon. the Lady Newcastle. London, 1653.

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Mr. Jenkins appreciatively sums up her powers when he says that her books contain—

"Indisputable evidence of a genius as high-born in the realms of intellect as its possessor was exalted in the ranks of society; a genius strong-winged and swift, fertile and comprehensive, but ruined by deficient culture, by literary dissipation, and the absence of concatenation and the sense of proportion." *

At the close of her autobiography the Duchess deprecates the censure of readers who will scornfully ask—

"'Why hath this lady writ her own life, since none cares to know whose daughter she was, or whose wife she is, or how she was bred, or what fortunes she had, or what humour or disposition she was of?' I answer that it is true that 'tis of no purpose to the reader, but it is to the authoress. I write it for my own sake, not theirs. Neither did I intend this piece for to delight, but to divulge; not to please the fancy, but to tell the truth, lest after-ages should mistake in not knowing I was daughter to one Master Lucas of St. John's, near Colchester in Essex, and second wife to the Lord Marquis of Newcastle: for my lord having had two wives I might easily have been mistaken, especially if I should die and my lord marry again."

This seems a curious anticipation to have crossed the mind of a wife more than thirty years her husband's junior. But it was doubly fulfilled. The Duchess died in January, 1673–4, and Sir Egerton Brydges points out that, although the Duke gave her no successor, that *répertoire* of

* "The Cavalier and his Lady," p. 8.

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curiosities of literature, the "Lounger's Common-place-Book," confused her with the first wife, calling her "the daughter of William Bassett, Esq."

The Duke survived her three years. How lonely must have seemed the learned seclusion, the "innocent magnificence" of Welbeck, without the faithful and admiring wife who, in all her flights of fancy, had never even imagined that she loved another; who had made him her hero of romance in the radiance of her youth and beauty; and who, in the prime of life, and when surrounded by all the temptations of rank and luxury, found constant occupation and delight in recording his career and chronicling his sayings!

They rest together now in Westminster Abbey, the "Loyal Duke," and his "wise, witty, and learned Lady . . . a most virtuous, loving, and careful wife." And if few out of the thousands who glance at the inscription on their stately monument know how unwontedly true is its commendation, that need not vex their spirits. The Duke's memory lives in his wife's pages; and the ambition to which the Duchess pleaded guilty * may be fully satisfied. Such a tribute as this

* "I fear my ambition inclines to vain-glory. For I am very ambitious; yet 'tis neither for beauty, wit, titles, wealth, nor power, but as they are steps to raise me to Fame's Tower, which is to live by remembrance in after-ages."

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from Charles Lamb is in itself sufficient literary immortality: "Where a book is at once both good and rare; where the individual is almost the species, and when that perishes—

> 'We know not where is that Promethean spark
> That can its light relumine'—

such a book, for instance, as the 'Life of the Duke of Newcastle,' by his Duchess—no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to house and keep safe such a jewel." *

* "Essays of Elia." ("Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading.") Moxon, edit. 1867. Page 41.

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# MARY, COUNTESS COWPER.

WHEN lecturing on the "Four Georges," Thackeray declared, speaking of the reign of George the Second, that in "that dreadfully selfish time," among those crowds, "rouged and lying and fawning," he could not find "any one to be friends with. Show me," he exclaims, "some good person about that Court: find me, among those selfish courtiers, those dissolute gay people, some one being whom I can love and regard."

His arraignment applies with equal justice to the Court held by George and his wife while still Prince and Princess of Wales. Yet in that corrupt circle Thackeray would certainly have found the friend he desired, had the diary of Caroline of Anspach's Lady of the Bedchamber been earlier given to the world. Its frank, shrewd pages, notwithstanding the hasty brevity with which they were penned, give as distinct a picture of the writer's warm heart, active mind, and quick perception of the false or absurd, as the frontispiece, copied from Sir Godfrey Kneller, does of her

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noble head, with its broad, candid brow, magnificent dark eyes, and sweet, sensible mouth. The reason she gives for writing it is characteristic: "The perpetual lies that one hears have determined me, in spite of my want of leisure, to write down all the events that are worth remembering whilst I am at Court; and although I find it will be impossible for me to do this daily, yet I hope I shall be able to have an hour or two once a week, and I intend this only for my own use, it being a rough draft only, which, if God bless me with health and leisure, I intend hereafter to revise and digest into a better method."

Pretty Molly Clavering, toasted by the Kit Cat Club, sung by Earl Rivers, admired, accomplished, and light-hearted, was so free from the infection of the age as to reply, when told that the King's manner showed she might rule the Court if she chose: "Power would be bought too dear by such dishonourable work." And so devoted a wife did she become, that after seventeen happy married years she only survived her husband a few months: "Dying," says her daughter, "of a malady often talked of, but seldom seen—a broken heart." *

She was born in 1685, her father being John

* "Diary of Mary, Countess Cowper." Murray, 1864. Introduction, p. xiv.

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Clavering, of Chopwell, Durham, a cadet of the old Northumbrian family which owned Callalee and Axwell, many of whose members suffered severely both in purse and person for their Jacobite fidelity. The writer of the brief biographical introduction regrets that "the sum of her personal memoirs is scanty;" but has not thought it worth while to record, even for refutation, a rumour connecting her with a dismal tragedy, which for a time clouded the prospects of her future husband, and threatened to cut short the career of his favourite brother.

While Mary Clavering was progressing from the nursery to the schoolroom, William and Spencer Cowper, sons of Sir William Cowper, of Hertford Castle, were young men distinguished for good looks, graceful manners, and great talent. William, a King's Counsel, sat for Hertford together with his father; Spencer was a barrister, of good income and standing, who went the Home Circuit with William, and shared his lodgings at the assize courts. Both brothers were married to young women of beauty and position—the elder to Judith, daughter of Sir Robert Booth; the younger to Pennington, daughter of John Goodere, belonging to an old west country family.* The

* Within twenty years of Spencer Cowper's trial, the "Bristol



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Cowpers had strong personal and political ties to Hertford, and frequently visited the town, keeping up a friendly intimacy with the electors, and especially with the widow and daughter of a rich Quaker named Stout, who had been one of their most influential supporters.

Sarah Stout, a handsome Quakeress of twenty-six, visited at Sir William Cowper's town-house in Hatton Garden, and was in confidential correspondence with his daughters-in-law. When Mrs. William Cowper stayed in Hertford she exchanged visits with Miss Stout every day; when Mrs. Spencer Cowper visited the town, she introduced her rich and pretty friend to a gentleman named Marshall, who proposed to her but was refused. Meanwhile Spencer Cowper, at Miss Stout's request, invested £200 of her fortune in a mortgage—the only money he ever disposed of for her.

The day before the Spring assizes of 1699 were opened, Spencer Cowper arrived at Hertford and dined with the Stouts. In the evening the mother left her daughter and her guest, thinking they had money matters to discuss,* and soon after-

Tragedy" occurred—the murder of Sir John Dineley Goodere, or Goodyere, by his brother, Captain Goodyere.

* As they had, for Mr. Cowper paid her six pounds odd as interest from the mortgagor, which was found in her pocket after her death, and a receipt for the sum, which she had not signed, lay on the parlour table.

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wards Miss Stout ordered her servant to prepare a bedroom for Mr. Cowper, who made no remark. At a quarter to eleven, while the maid was warming the bed, she heard the front door shut violently, and on going downstairs found the parlour empty. She and Mrs. Stout sat up all night for Sarah, but heard nothing of her till her body was discovered next morning in the Priory River, which flows through Hertford about half a mile from her home. At the inquest Spencer Cowper stated that he had left Sarah Stout in her own house, where he never intended to sleep, having already taken possession of rooms engaged for his brother, who was detained in London. A verdict of suicide while of unsound mind was returned, and Mr. Cowper went on to Chelmsford with the judges and finished the circuit.

Two months later Spencer Cowper and three of his friends—attorneys and a scrivener, men of good character and means, who had gone to Hertford on legal business on the same day as himself—were charged with the murder of the young Quakeress, who it was alleged had been strangled and then thrown into the river. The only evidence brought against the three strangers was a piece of cord found in their room; the hot, dirty, and dishevelled appearance of one of them,

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who had ridden far in bad weather; and a jesting conversation overheard, and as they alleged misrepresented, by the people in whose house they lodged, on the beauty, fortune, and matrimonial prospects of Sarah Stout.

Spencer Cowper defended himself and his friends with great ability, and produced two anonymous letters which, if written by Sarah Stout, as he declared, showed a mad infatuation for him quite sufficient to account for the fits of despondency and threats of self-destruction proved by many witnesses, and supporting the theory of suicide. The Stouts on their part professed to miss a large sum of money belonging to Sarah, and to consider Mr. Cowper accountable for it; but, in accordance with the rules of their sect, would make oath of nothing After a long trial and most conflicting medical evidence, whose remarkable details it is impossible to reproduce here,* all four prisoners were acquitted. Subsequent legal proceedings were however taken by the Stout family, and though they fell through, strong prejudice was excited against the Cowpers, and at the next general election it was clear that they had no chance of being returned. Sir William retired, and Spencer Cowper some time afterwards became member for Truro.

* Howell's "State Trials," vol. xiii., 1696-1700.

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Local tradition preserved many versions of the story. Every midnight Sarah Stout's ghost was said to flit through the quiet streets of Hertford on her way to the mill race where her corpse was found, and at length the Rev. J. Hinton, rector of Alderton, Northamptonshire, made a communication to the *European Magazine*, wildly at variance with the evidence.

"Mrs. Sarah Stout," says this authority, "whose death was charged upon Spencer Cowper, was strangled accidentally by drawing the steen-kirk too tight upon her neck, as she, with five or six young persons, were at a game of romps upon the staircase; but it was not done by Mr. Cowper, though one of the company. Mrs. Clavering, Lord Chancellor Cowper's second wife, whom he married during the life of the first" [another surprisingly cool assertion],* "was there

* The violence of party animosity, whose extent later generations can hardly realize, will alone account, says Lord Campbell, for the prevalence of this slander, freely used to disqualify William Cowper from being made "Keeper of the Queen's Conscience." The rumour varied at various times, from the charge of having married Judith Booth while an imaginary first wife was still living, to that of marrying Molly Clavering in the lifetime of Judith Cowper; it procured the Lord Keeper the nickname of "Bigamy Will;" it was embodied, with many adornments, like the sad story of Sarah Stout, in the infamous "New Atalantis;" and it was gravely cited by Voltaire in his "Philosophical Dictionary," where he says, treating of Polygamy: "Il est public en Angleterre, et on voudroit le nier en vain, que le Chancellier Cowper épousa deux femmes, qui vécurent ensemble dans sa maison avec une concorde singulière qui fit honneur à tous trois. Plusieurs curieux ont encore le petit livre que ce Chancellier composa en faveur de la Polygamie." The "little book" was of course as mythical as the *concorde* which Voltaire thought so honourable to all parties, and which it is perfectly certain that Molly Clavering would not have maintained under such circumstances.

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too. They were so confounded with the accident that they foolishly resolved to throw her into the water, thinking it would pass that she had drowned herself."

After his acquittal Spencer Cowper resumed his legal practice, becoming in course of time Chief Justice of the County Palatine, and Judge of the Common Pleas. He died in the reign of George II., and there is a handsome monument to his memory in Hertingfordbury Church. The poet Cowper was his nephew.

William Cowper "took refuge in Berealstone," says Lord Campbell, and sat for that place till Queen Anne bestowed the Great Seal and the title of Lord Keeper upon him. He was then forty-one—"the youngest Lord Keeper that had ever been." His daughter Lady Sarah says, "he looked very young, and wearing his hair made him appear yet more so; which the Queen observing, obliged him to cut it off, telling him the world would say she had given the seals to a boy."

The Duchess of Marlborough, in her trenchant "Characters of Contemporaries," takes the credit of this appointment to herself.

"For my Lord Cowper," she says, "I constantly laboured with the Queen to make him Keeper, and at last, by a great deal of drudgery, I succeeded. Upon which my Lord Halifax came to me from my Lord Cowper to appoint a time for him to make his acknowledgments to me. I

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answered, upon condition that he would not say anything upon that subject, for I would not be thanked for contributing to bring so valuable a man into that post."

Lord Cowper told her that the gratitude he was forbidden to put into words could not be banished from his thoughts:

"And I must do him the justice to say," she adds, "that all the time I was at Court, and after I was removed, no man could possibly behave better to me than he did, not only as a gentleman, but as a friend, and as if he had been my own brother." *

Many belles in Queen Anne's Court would willingly have shared the new honours of the handsome and accomplished Lord Keeper, who had lost his wife and only child. His choice fell on Mary Clavering, then a beautiful girl of twenty, who made his acquaintance by consulting him on some law business at his chambers. After a brief wooing they were married, during the Long Vacation of 1706. The wedding was kept secret for a time, and in the first letter Lord Cowper wrote to his wife after their marriage he says:

"The first thing I do this morning is to sit down to acquaint my life what I am very sure your concern for me will not think impertinent, that I got safe to my house yesterday, after a very troublesome journey. . . . You declare against speeches, and I believe care as little to read

* "Private Correspondence, etc., of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough," vol. ii. p. 150.

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as hear them, and certainly never man stood less in need of them, if the truest love and highest esteem are able to give undeniable evidence of themselves. I believe they are, and therefore shall depend for ever on making love to you that way. Though the part I act is very painful, yet 'tis heaven to what I should have felt if I had left you for any time with distrust of the sincerity of my intentions towards you. . . . Take care of the point wherein my interest is so much concerned, which is now become yours; and I hope so to order things as in a little time, without any disadvantage that may incur the censure of the pretended wise, to spend the remainder of my life in the enjoyment of that happiness my imagination hath laid up for it." *

This concealment, short though it proved, had some romantic consequences. Lady Harriet Vere, the most pertinacious of the young women who "laid their snares" for the Lord Keeper, soon discovered who was her most dangerous rival, and sent letters to Lord Cowper every day by "a fellow dressed up in woman's clothes, who could never be overtaken," first threatening him with professional injury if he married the lady of his love, and next abusing her as "a mean wretch," and a coquette, who used her proficiency in music to attract "all the rakes in town;" adding that one night at a theatre Lord Wharton had said to Lord Dorchester, "Now that the opera's done, let's go and hear Molly Clavering play it over again."

* Campbell's "Lives of the Lord Chancellors," 5th edit., 1868, vol. v. p. 261.

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This, Lady Cowper observes indignantly, was "a plain lie, for I never did play in any public company, and only at home when anybody that visited my aunt Wood, with whom I lived, asked me. And for those two lords, I had never been in a room with either of them in my whole life."

At last Lady Harriet, who, for more than a month, had gone every Sunday in a hackney coach "to ogle my lord and pass and repass his coach when he went and came from chapel," contrived an interview with him, under cover of a Cause in which a friend was concerned. He found her "set out in all her airs, with her elbow on a table that had two wax candles on it, and holding her head, which she said ached—and not a word said of the Cause." When Lady Harriet's confidants went so far as, by her authority, to offer Lord Cowper her hand and fortune, he avowed his marriage, saying that he was sure he had met with a wife whose conduct was unblemished, since the greatest enemy she had in the world had been writing him an invective against her every day, and yet the worst thing she was charged with was "playing best upon the harpsichord of any woman in England." A very neat way of turning the tables on her detractor.

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In 1710, on a change of Ministers, Lord Cowper also sent in his resignation, despite the entreaties of Queen Anne, telling her that to keep in when all his friends were out would be infamous. He then retired to his Hertfordshire seat, till George I. on his accession summoned him to receive the Great Seal a second time. At this period begins what Lord Campbell (who saw part of the MS. and quoted from it freely) justly calls Lady Cowper's "charming diary—a more lively picture of the Court of England at the commencement of the Brunswick Dynasty than I have ever met with."

She had corresponded with Princess Caroline for four years before the latter left Hanover, but received no appointment in her household till after George I.'s coronation. At this grand ceremony the peeresses' place was so crowded that Lady Cowper took refuge on the bishops' bench and thence was pushed up the pulpit stairs, from which the peers told her husband they "hoped she would preach." She would evidently have given them sound Protestant doctrine, for she says, "I never was so affected with joy in all my life. It brought tears into my eyes, and I hope I shall never forget the blessing of seeing our holy religion thus preserved, as well as our liberties and properties."

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Some of the Jacobite peeresses felt differently. They were all there, "looking as cheerful as they could, but very peevish with everybody that spoke to them." Lady Dorchester (daughter of Sir Charles Sedley), who stood just below Lady Cowper, turned to her when the Archbishop went round the throne demanding the assent of the people, and said—"Does the old fool think anybody here will say *No*, when there are so many drawn swords?"

Lady Cowper's elevated position doubtless displayed her beauty to advantage, for at the Drawing Room next day the Princess of Wales said to her, "You have made a conquest;" and added, laughing at her blushes, "'tis Mr. Bernstorff,* who never was in love in his life before; and 'tis so considerable a conquest that you ought to be proud of it; and I, to please him, have ordered him to make you a compliment from me." †

This "compliment" was the post of Lady of the Bedchamber, which Lady Cowper accepted with unaffected delight, giving her admirer her husband's "Treatise on the State of Parties,"

* Baron Bernstorff, one of the King's three favourite German Ministers.

† "Diary of Mary, Countess Cowper," p. 6.

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which she had "transcribed and translated in French and English" for the King. The only language George and his Lord Keeper had in common was Latin, in which the latter sometimes wrote his State papers; when he wanted them turned into French Lady Cowper did it, and Lord Campbell quotes one of the playful and affectionate notes in which her husband asks his "dear Rogue" to help him.

Lady Cowper's colleague in her post was the Duchess of Shrewsbury, a woman of very different reputation, and apt to be jealous of her associate's ready wit. Supping at Madame Kielmansegge's one evening, the Duchess told King George how large the King of France's appetite was, counting twenty things on her fingers, and saying, "Sire, il mange ceci et cela." On which Lady Cowper added, "Sire, Madame la Duchesse oublie qu'il a bien plus mangé que cela." "Qu'a-t-il mangé, donc?" inquired the King. "Sire, il a mangé et dévoré son peuple; et si la Providence n'avoit pas conduit Votre Majesté au trône, au moment qu'elle l'a fait, il nous auroit mangé aussi." This sally the King repeated to many persons, with immense gratification.

Already Lady Cowper was awkwardly placed between the favourites of the King and of his

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family, for Mrs. Howard, whose own position was considered very doubtful, told her that the Princess mortally hated Madame Kielmansegge and "thought her a wicked woman," and such a plotter that "she never stuck a pin into her gown without a design."

On November 8 the diary contains this entry: "My birthday. Pray God grant that the rest of my life may be passed according to His will and in His service." Lady Cowper did not rest satisfied with "the aspiration to be good," she was prepared to put her principles into practice on all points. Being much laughed at for playing very low at basset about a week later, she says:

"I told my mistress I played out of duty, not inclination, and having four children nobody would think ill of me if for their sakes I desired to save my money, when I did not do anything that was mean, dishonest, or dishonourable. For which she commended me, and said she thought the principal duty of a woman was to take care of her children."

Lady Cowper's own religious feeling was so sincere that she was not afraid to defend her friends even when charged with heresy. When the Countess of Nottingham tried to convince the Princess that Dr. Clarke's writings were not orthodox, Lady Cowper observed:

"'Madam, I have read these books, and I really see no cause to accuse him of heresy, which is a heavy charge.

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But I suppose your ladyship is better acquainted with them than I. Since you can accuse him, pray quote a passage out of his books.' To which she answered, drawing herself up as if she had been afraid of something : 'Not I, indeed. I dare not trust myself with the reading such books! I assure you I never looked into them.' 'What, madam,' said I, 'do you undertake to condemn anybody as a heretic without knowing what it is they believe and maintain? I would not venture to do so for all the world.'"

Lady Cowper did not reserve her championship for her clerical friends; her sympathies were, like those of a recent heroine, "rather mixed." But at all events she was invariably genuine, and never self-engrossed.

"The Princess thanked me," she says, "for drinking her health at supper. I told her I never failed at my meals drinking hers and my master's. On which the Prince said he did not wonder he had such good health since he came to England, as I took so much part in it. I told him that before his coming hither I and my children had constantly drunk his health by the name of 'young Hanover brave,' which was the title Mr. Congreve had given him in a ballad. This made him ask who Mr. Congreve was, and so gave me an opportunity of saying all the good of Mr. Congreve which I think he truly deserves."

Lady Cowper was not without her share of crumpled rose-leaves. Her relations were constantly worrying her to get them places, and grumbling if they did not like them when obtained. Servants were not more faultless then than now; after one Drawing Room, when the apartments

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were very hot, she catches "a great cold coming out," as her chairmen had deserted her.

One pretty young woman, Mdlle. Schutz, a niece of Baron Bernstorff's, was always pestering her for ornaments; she wanted a "suit of gold ribbons;" she wanted a "lace head;" she wanted Lady Cowper's pearl necklace; finally, she wanted her diamonds, adding insult to injury by saying, "I make no scruple in borrowing them from you, because you are best in your state of nature and worst when you are dressed out, your jewels not becoming you."

Imagine the feelings of a handsome woman on being told that her diamonds did not become her! No wonder Lady Cowper exclaims, "Commend me to the assurance of these foreigners!"

There were graver troubles behind. Many of Lady Cowper's relations were engaged in the Jacobite rising of 1715; and her cousin Mr. Foster, member for Northumberland, who proclaimed the Pretender at Warkworth, was made general in the rebel force; he was taken prisoner at Preston, and Mdlle. Schutz told Lady Cowper that her uncle Baron Bernstorff would see that he was allowed to make his escape on the road to London, if she wished it. Her answer is not recorded, but her "cousin Tom" escaped from Newgate a few

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days before that fixed for his trial, and made his way to France. On December 5 Lady Cowper writes:

"This week the prisoners were brought to town from Preston. They came in with their arms tied, and their horses (whose bridles were taken off) led each by a soldier. The mob insulted them terribly, carrying a warming-pan before them, and saying a thousand barbarous things, which some of the prisoners returned with spirit. The chief of my father's family"—Clavering of Callalee—"was amongst them. He is above seventy years old. A desperate fortune drove him from home in hopes to have repaired it. I did not see them come into town, nor let any of my children do so. I thought it would be insulting the relations I had here; though almost everybody went to see them."

The next entry in the diary is on a pleasanter subject. Lady Cowper, the spirited champion of her husband whenever enemies slandered or officious friends criticized him, is delighted to record one of the reforms he effected. Till his time the Chancellor used on New Year's Day to receive gifts from the lawyers, amounting to nearly £3000,* but Lord Cowper signified to all who had been in the habit of making these offerings that he would receive none of them. Bishop Burnet calls this "a great example." Formerly, says Lady Cowper, every Chancellor blamed the custom but none forbade it. The Earl of Notting-

* Burnet, in his "Reign of Queen Anne," says £1500.

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ham (Heneage Finch, Dryden's "Amri") used to receive the presents, standing by a table, and as he took the money and laid it down, "he used to cry out, 'Oh, tyrant *cuhtom!*' for he lisped."

When the rebels were tried in the following month, Lord Cowper was made High Steward, "to his vexation and mine," says his wife.

"The servants had all new liveries. . . . I was told it was customary to make them fine upon this occasion, but had them all plain. I think it very wrong to make a parade upon so dismal an occasion as that of putting to death one's fellow-creatures; nor could I go to the trial to see them receive their sentences, having a relation among them, my Lord Widdrington.* The Prince was there, and came home much touched with compassion. What pity it is that such cruelties should be necessary!"

A few days afterwards Lord Cowper became so ill that he was inclined to resign his office, and his warm-hearted wife, though fond of the world of politics and fashion, whose excitement she enjoyed without being tainted by its corruption, says she resolved nevermore to press him to keep his place.

"I told him that I would never oppose anything he had a mind to do, and offered him, if it would be any pleasure done him, to retire with him into the country and quit too, and what was more, never to repine at doing so, though it was the greatest sacrifice that could be made him. . . . I am out

* Impeached with the Earl of Derwentwater, but afterwards pardoned.



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of my wits to see him suffer, which I declare is ten times worse than death to me, and would rather live with him all my life on bread and cheese, up three pair of stairs, than be all this world can make me and at the same time see him suffer." *

During Lord Cowper's illness, his wife was much tormented by the insatiable Mdlle. Schutz, "a very unreasonable body." When Lady Cowper excuses herself from dining at Baron Bernstorff's, because she wants to nurse her husband, Mademoiselle goes to her house, and will take no hints that her hostess wishes to be alone, but "took a pleasure in staying, because I was uneasy at it." Next morning she offers by letter to spend the whole day with Lady Cowper. "I thank her for nothing," says the diarist, out of temper for once; "I had too much of her impertinence last night."

In March occurred the strange appearance known to tradition as "Lord Derwentwater's Lights." Dr. Clarke (the controversialist rector of St. James's, whom Lady Cowper defended from the charge of heresy) saw it from the beginning, and described it to her thus:

"First a black cloud, whence smoke and light issued on

* Lord Cowper had shown equal devotion to his wife. Speaking of Kneller's portrait of him, she says: "It is for my dressing-room, and in the same posture that the dear fellow watched me so many weeks in my great illness."

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every side, then a great body of pale fire, that rolled up and down, sending forth all sorts of colours like the rainbow for two or three minutes. After that it was like pale elementary fire, issuing on all sides of the horizon, but especially north and north-west, where it fixed at last. . . . About one o'clock, this phenomenon was so strong that the whole face of the heavens was entirely covered with it." "The light was then so great," adds Lady Cowper, "that I could, out of my window, see people walk across Lincoln's Inn Fields, though there was no moon. I could hardly make my chairmen come home with me, they were so frightened ; and I was forced to let my glass down and preach to them as I went along, to comfort them. I'm sure anybody that had overheard the dialogue would have laughed heartily. All the people were drawn out into the streets, which were so full one could hardly pass, and all frighted to death. Both parties turned it on their enemies. The Whigs said it was God's judgment on the horrid rebellion, and the Tories that it came for the Whigs taking off the two lords that were executed."

Next day she says the town is full of lies about what has been seen in the night. Two armies were fighting in the air ; two men were fighting with flaming swords over Lincoln's Inn Fields ; "the mob that went to Mr. Linet's burial" saw two men fighting in the air without heads ; meditation on the manner of Linet's death may have prepared them to see marvels. He was a Jacobite, curate to Dr. Walton of Whitechapel, and forced much against his will to take the oaths. "They choked him," says Lady Cowper ; "for he actually died the next day, of no other disease but swearing to the Government."

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Dr. Walton himself was an oddity. Having quarrelled with Dr. Kennett (afterwards Bishop of Peterborough) he had an altar-piece painted for his church containing Dr. Kennett's portrait as Judas Iscariot; "and, to make it more sure, had the Doctor's great black patch put under the wig upon the forehead."

Lady Cowper also tells one of the most absurd ghost stories ever put on record. Sir Coplestone Bampfylde (M.P. for Devonshire) coming to town, met with a Scotch pedlar, who offered him twenty-four ells of brown holland so cheap that he bought it, tied it up in paper, and carefully put it himself into his portmanteau. As Sir Coplestone was crossing a great plain with his man and a neighbouring gentleman, a sudden light shone round them, the horses were frightened, the baronet and his friend thrown, and the groom run away with for two miles. When the gentlemen got up they saw something white at a little distance, which proved to be the "twenty-four ells of fine holland," stretched out as for whitening on the ground. On the return of the groom they looked at the portmanteau and found it fast and the paper and string whole; but when they came to open it "the holland was gone, to their great amazement;" though on the whole it would have been more

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amazing had the holland remained in the parcel, seeing that at the same time it was stretched on the ground. Lady Cowper adds:

"Sir Coplestone is a drunken country gentleman, and if he did not invent this (which I am afraid he did), yet it may be a drunken fume. And it seems to me he did not mightily believe it himself; for he says he has made the holland into shirts, and expects that some murdered body will come and demand them of him one day or another."

Many curious traces of the times are to be found in the diary. At the March Drawing Room one George Mayo "was turned out for being drunk and saucy. He fell out with Sir James Baker and pulled him by the nose." In April Mr. Michelwaithe was set upon by nine footpads

"at the end of Bedford Row, in the road which goes there from Pancras Church to Gray's Inn Lane. His servants and he fired at them again, and the pads did the same, till all the fire was spent, and then he rode through them towards the town to call for help, and they ran away."

Under "the dead wall of Gray's Inn Gardens" a lady and her son were met by two men, one of whom knocked the lantern out of the son's hand and ran off with his hat and wig, and the other shot the lady through the head. While the camp was in Hyde Park, Lady Cowper stayed at Kensington, "the roads being so secure by it that one

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might come from London any time of the night without danger." Longer journeys were contemplated with natural dread. Lady Essex Robartes goes to take leave of Lady Cowper before starting for Cornwall; she will be about twelve days on the road: "She undertakes it with great fear."

Lady Cowper gives an appalling account of the precocity of the little Princesses. "They are miracles of their ages, especially Princess Anne," afterwards Princess of Orange, "who at five years old speaks, reads, and writes both German and French to perfection, knows a great deal of history and geography, speaks English very prettily, and dances very well."

The Princess of Wales was affronted by the Bishop of London, who as Dean of the Chapel Royal respectfully offered his assistance in her theological studies. "He is very impertinent," she exclaimed indignantly, "to suppose that I, who refused to be Empress for the sake of the Protestant religion, don't understand it fully!" This "inscrutable woman," as Thackeray calls her, treated the courtiers to curious alternations of pride, familiarity, and ill-temper. Walking in the gallery at Hampton Court with Lord Sunderland, and quarrelling fiercely, she desired him to speak lower, or the people in the gardens would hear.

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"Let them hear!" he replied. "Well, if you have a mind, let 'em," said the Princess. "But you shall walk next the windows, for in the humour we both are, one of us must certainly jump out, and I'm resolved it shan't be me!"

The Princess, who was a great walker and enjoyed every description of exercise, was fond of bowls, at which she played every evening on the green, or "Green Gallery," at Windsor. The Duchess of Monmouth used often to be present.

"The Princess loved her mightily," says Lady Cowper, "and certainly no woman of her years ever deserved it so well. She had all the life and fire of youth, and it was marvellous to see that the many afflictions she had suffered had not touched her wit and good nature, but at upwards of three-score she had both in their full perfection."

Look on this picture and on that!—the Duchess who, "in pride of youth, in beauty's bloom, had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb," in her lively old age playing at bowls with the first Princess of Wales of the House of Hanover!

From 1716 to 1720 there is a gap in the diary.

During the interval, in April, 1718, Lord Cowper resigned the Great Seal. "The Government," says Lord Stanhope,

"sustained at this time another loss, and no light one, in Lord Cowper. His motive I do not find explicitly stated. . . . That he parted from his colleagues on good terms, may be presumed from his being promoted to an earldom. . . . His

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health was declining, and his temper had soured, and either of these circumstances might suggest a wish for retirement." *

We have seen in his wife's diary that illness had made Lord Cowper desire private life; there are also frequent charges of "peevishness" brought against him by political rivals, but these are not entertained by Lady Cowper for a moment. He occasionally alludes to infirmities of temper himself, however, in the letters addressed to his wife when she was in waiting (having remained in the household of the Princess) and he in his favourite Colegreen, where he cultivated his garden and educated his children. He was often in town himself, active and public-spirited in Parliament and the Privy Council.

Lord Campbell attributes Lord Cowper's resignation to the divisions in the royal family, his fidelity to the Prince having caused the King to regard him coldly. This was very unjust, after George's repeated declarations that Lord Cowper was almost the only honest, disinterested man in the kingdom. On one occasion the King told the Princess that he had "seen above fifty people, and everybody had asked for something but Lord Cowper." She rejoined: "Sir, you look ill to-day." "I may well look ill," he answered laughingly,

* "History of England," 5th edit., vol. i. p. 299.

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"for I have had a world of blood drawn from me."

When Lady Cowper's diary recommences,* she records many overtures made to Lord Cowper to resume office, and constant references to his advice and experience when negotiations were opened for reconciling the King to the Prince and Princess. This great object was attained at last, after a thousand intrigues, and amidst general, though rather frothy, rejoicings.

"Everything gay and laughing," writes Lady Cowper, "nothing but kissing and wishing of joy. . . . I wished the Prince joy and comfort of what had been doing. He embraced and kissed me five or six times, and with his usual heartiness when he means sincerely. He said he knew the part I took in all his good or ill fortune,† and he knew my good heart so well, he was sure I was pleased with this. The Princess burst into a loud laugh, and said, 'So! I think you two always kiss upon great occasions.'"

There was a little domestic embracing and congratulating as well, and we know how genuine that must have been: "I kissed Lord Cowper at coming home," the diary continues, "and said to him: 'Well, I thank God your head is your own, and that's more than one could be sure of two

* Lord Campbell, who urged the publication of the earlier portion, did not see this part of the diary, which was not discovered till 1863.

† The Prince once told Lord Cowper that he should not have known what to do without his lady, who had been very necessary to him, and had "done purely."

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months ago.'" She alludes here to the very general belief that, if the open enmity between the King and Prince had continued, a new and successful Jacobite rising would have ensued.

The voice of the charmer, however, could not prevail on Lord Cowper to resume the burden he had laid down. The day after the general embracing—

"He came to my bedside," writes his wife, "and said, 'My dear girl, I am come to let you the first into my secrets. I have with you thought to take service again, and by that show them, though I was not originally in this thing, yet I think a reconciliation so right and so necessary, that I will help to making everything in its own condition again. . . . But upon consideration, all the reasons of my quitting subsist still, except the unfortunate breach in the royal family. I am old and infirm, and rich enough; and I have resolved not to enslave myself to any power upon earth. At five and fifty 'tis time to think of making life easy; my infirmities will not let me struggle with knaves and fools.'"

He possibly felt that the mended cup would be in continual danger of breaking again. The situation was indeed what we should now call "strained" to an almost unbearable extent. Lady Cowper compares the appearance of the first Drawing Room to that of

"two armies drawn up in battle array. For the King's Court was all at the top of the room, behind the King; and the Prince's Court behind him. The Prince looked down and behaved prodigious well. The King cast an angry look that

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way every now and then; and one could not help thinking 'twas like a little dog and a cat—whenever the dog stirs a foot, the cat sets up her back and is ready to fly at him."

In April, 1720, Lady Cowper writes:

"The King came into the little Princesses' apartment about six. The Princess was in the front room to receive him, and my Lord Grantham and I as attendants; and he brought the two Turks* with him. . . . Mahomet entertained us with the praise of the late Queen of Prussia, sister to the King, who died at Hanover of two days' sickness, suspected of having been poisoned, before she left Berlin, with diamond powder. . . . The King, he said, was in such sorrow that he was five days without eating or sleeping, but kept walking and wailing all the time, and, by hitting his toes against the wainscot, which he ever does when he walks, he had worn out his shoes till his toes came out two inches at the foot. He refused to see any one, till Mahomet found the Duke of York in the outward room, and carried him in without asking leave. As soon as the King saw the Duke of York he flung his arms about his neck, and said, 'Quelle perte venons-nous de faire, mon frère! Est-il possible que cette charmante femme nous puisse quitter en si peu de temps?'" †

Although Lord Cowper stuck to his resolution of accepting neither place nor pension, and openly denounced the South Sea Bubble and other schemes for raising money countenanced by the royal family and the ministers, he did not wish his wife to go into seclusion with him.

* Mahomet and Mustapha, taken prisoners when George I. was serving with the Imperial army, and admitted to his service. On his arrival in England, they were made Pages of the Backstairs, and were supposed to have influence with the King.

† "Diary of Mary, Countess Cowper," p. 150. Murray, 1864.

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"As to your present condition," he writes to her from Colegreen, "I hope, now the regret at parting is over, it is not only easy but delightful. It cannot be otherwise while you are with so good a mistress, and from whom you have received such proofs of kindness to you as cannot be counterfeit, whatever some would make you believe. If everybody would have counterfeited with *me* at that rate, I should not have had any cause to complain." *

Lady Cowper had long been of the same opinion. Early in her official connection with the Princess of Wales she wrote: "I am so charmed with her good nature and good qualities that I shall never think I can do enough to please her. I am sure if being sincerely true and just to her will be any means to merit her favour, I shall have it, for I am come into the Court with resolution never to tell a lie." Perhaps the Lady of the Bedchamber was too straightforward for one whom her Hanoverian attendants called *Grandissime Comédienne.* At any rate, the Princess's manner changed to Lady Cowper after her reappearance at St. James's; she was surrounded by new flatterers, and she cooled towards her old friends.

But nothing could daunt Lady Cowper's outspoken honesty. The very last entry in her journal, dated Friday, July 10, 1720, records how when the Princess, speaking to Mrs. Wake (wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury) of the great

* See Campbell's "Lives of the Lord Chancellors."

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things to be done for her and the Prince now they had made their submission, concluded: "Our children we shall have, and the regency they promise us, but I will venture my nose we shan't have it"—Lady Cowper, who was putting on the Princess's gloves, rejoined: "Yes, Madam. If your Highness had thirty noses, you might venture them all without the least danger to them!"

Two years later attempts were made to implicate Lord Cowper in Layer's Jacobite conspiracy. They were as futile as false: but unfortunately the report that his house was to be searched so disturbed his wife that she burnt part of her diary (which she had never been able to revise, as she intended) and many papers relating and belonging to the Prince and Princess of Wales, which she thought might be mischievous if discovered. Many years afterwards Caroline, then Queen, is reported to have shown animosity to the daughter of her old friend, under the impression that she retained compromising documents.

"If there were any such, they were committed to the fire," writes Lady Sarah, "and I have none the Queen can be in any uneasiness about, unless from my retaining expressions of friendship she never felt, and promises I have cause to think she has no intention to perform."

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On October 3, 1723, Lord Cowper, then in town, wrote to his "dearest life," promising to join her at Colegreen on the following Saturday. He did so, but suffered from cold on the journey, was taken violently ill on his arrival, and died on the following Thursday, in his sixtieth year. His wife and children were with him, and, according to Spence's "Anecdotes," his dying injunction to his son was that he should never travel. If true, this may have been intended as a precaution against Jacobite influences. Lord Cowper was buried in Hertingfordbury Church, where his beloved brother Spencer was afterwards laid.

"The latter end of December," writes Lady Sarah, "my mother grew extremely ill. She lost her appetite entirely, and at times her memory, so that she would speak of my father as if living, ask for him, and expect him home. When she recollected his death it seemed to be with so lively a grief as if it had just then happened." She died in the following February, in her thirty-ninth year. The library at Panshanger is said to contain a large collection of books, some on rather abstruse subjects, which belonged to her, and are copiously annotated in her handwriting.

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# LADY HERVEY: THE HOME LIFE OF A COURT LADY.

WE generally think of "the beautiful Molly Lepell" as one of that gay group of maids of honour, more merry than wise, so prominent in the memoirs of their time, who attended Caroline of Anspach when the "young Court" of the Prince and Princess of Wales drew all the wits and beauties from the "old Court" of George I.

The town career of these young women was one unbroken round of gaiety. A drawing-room at Leicester House every morning, an evening assembly there twice a week; balls, masquerades, ridottos,* operas and plays; increasing magnificence in dress, increasing extravagance in play, and increasing value set on showy accomplishments and a ready tongue, combined to make the "young Court" brilliant, attractive, corrupt, and godless—

* "A most entertaining sort of assembly," says Mrs. Delany; "you are at liberty to wander about as much as you please, and there is dancing, tea, coffee, chocolate, and all sorts of sweetmeats." —"Autobiography and Correspondence," vol. i. p. 253.

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the best school imaginable for sharpening the wits and hardening the heart.

When rusticating at Richmond Lodge or Hampton Court, however, not only the scene but the whole daily routine was radically changed, and its attendant hardships are pathetically described in one of Pope's letters to the Blounts. The unhappy victims were condemned

"to eat Westphalia ham in a morning, ride over hedges and ditches on borrowed hacks, come home in the heat of the day with a fever, and (what is worse a hundred times) with a red mark on the forehead from an uneasy hat . . . to simper an hour and catch cold in the Princess's apartment; from thence to dinner 'with what appetite they may,' —and after that till midnight walk, work, or think—which they please." *

No wonder he exclaims, his sympathy rising even to solemnity, "The life of a maid of honour is of all things the most miserable."

But not without alleviations! The wits and beaux of the day followed them to their riverside retreats, and fluttered round them in open adoration. Swift growled out compliments veiled in roughly playful abuse; Pope and Gay sang their praises in more polished verse; Lord Chesterfield the courtly, Lord Peterborough the romantic, "Hervey, fair of face" and bitter of tongue, worshipped at their shrine. The flattery which had

* Carruthers' "Life of Pope," p. 135.

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only been "polite" in town, grew tender in the country. "Mrs. Lepell walked with me three or four hours by the moonlight," says Pope, "and we met no creature of any quality but the King, giving audience to the Vice-Chancellor all alone under the garden wall."

Yet with all the high-flown love-making to which they were subjected, the maids of honour retained their hearty animal spirits, rode on the garden rollers, shook the windows (and the nerves) of solitary students at midnight, jumped down-stairs singing "Over the hills and far away," and rejoiced in practical jokes like a set of boisterous schoolgirls.

Mary, daughter of Brigadier-General Lepell, was the favourite of all the giddy party. Others might be as beautiful, but she had in perfection that art of pleasing which disarms envy itself. Others might be as witty, but their wit was poisoned by coarseness. When others were as much admired they paid the penalty of detraction, which, in that age of unbridled licence and scandal, nearly always attended acknowledged charms. But not one of rumour's thousand tongues breathed a whisper against her fair fame, or associated her with the intrigues which appear then to have been as much a matter of course to a fine lady



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as her toilet. Though in the Court, she was not of it, yet all the courtiers, male and female, were her friends, and she carried into retirement a strong interest in her old companions, whose follies neither involved nor alienated her.

Gay might well call her "youth's youngest daughter—sweet Lepell," for she became a maid of honour at fourteen! Yet even this precocious preferment was less incongruous than that which, according to the Duchess of Marlborough, made her "a cornet in her father's regiment as soon as she was born." Her birthplace was Sark, of which island the Lepells were called "Lords-proprietors," and she may have owed to a certain extent the soft and *spirituelle* vivacity of her manners, and her love for France and all things French, to the force of early association.

Pope, her devoted admirer, was proud of wearing her chains; he tells Broome, in March, 1720—"I am now constantly engaged at home in attending a lady I have a true friendship for, who is here at Twickenham in hopes of a recovery by our air from a dangerous illness—Mrs. Lepell." * Pope, no doubt, like all the rest of the world, would have been "surprised to hear" that his lovely invalid was then married to one

* Elwin's Pope, "Letters," vol. iii. p. 45.

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of the most noticeable figures of even that dazzling and depraved time—John Hervey, second son of the first Earl of Bristol. Hervey's personal distinction and grace, united so strangely to ghastly disease, his polished manners and cultivated mind, his cold heart, calculating brain, and complete negation of religion and morality, have been immortalized in the withering couplet which concludes Pope's picture of "Sporus":

> "Beauty that shocks you, parts that none can trust,
> Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust."

Yet Hervey had the power of attracting and retaining regard; for against the pitiless malignity of such foes as Pulteney and Pope, and the doubtful support of such allies as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, we may set, for so much as it was worth, the unwavering attachment of Queen Caroline,* and what was of infinitely more value, the anxious tenderness of Hervey's excellent father and the sorely tried but faithful affection of his wife.

* The "inscrutable" Caroline, who ridiculed her husband, hated some of her children and coldly tolerated others, and dropped friend after friend when each had served her turn, showed positive fondness for Lord Hervey up to the last hours of her life. She called him "her child, her pupil, her charge." She frankly avowed that she could not bear him out of her sight, adding, "It is well I am so old" [she was then fifty-one, and fourteen years Hervey's senior], "or I should be talked of for this creature."—Lord Hervey's "Memoirs," vol. i. p. 382.

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Their marriage, in accordance with what almost amounted to a fashion at that time, was not at first avowed. Contemporary publications state that it took place in the autumn of 1720, but in the spring of 1719 a letter from Lord Bristol affectionately claims Molly Lepell as his daughter, though speaking of her marriage as "secret." Croker says that the private marriage of another maid of honour, Mary Bellenden, to Colonel Campbell, afterwards Duke of Argyll, was made public at the same time, and his theory is that

"They influenced each other . . . all parties might be fearful of having offended by making a choice without the consent of their royal patrons, and they for mutual support agreed to brave the storm together, and announced their marriages and consequent resignations just previous to the courtly epoch of the birthday." *

Molly Lepell's marriage was happier than might have been anticipated from the character of the bridegroom. Lady Louisa Stuart, in her "Introductory Anecdotes" to her grandmother's letters, says that the young couple "lived together on very amicable terms, 'as well-bred as if not married at all,' but without any strong sympathies, and more like a French couple than an English one;" as if the average "English couple" of those days, especially when moving in fashionable circles,

* Introduction to Lord Hervey's "Memoirs," vol. i. p. 25.

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had been so very tender and domestic! But the letters themselves show that for some time, at all events, this polite indifference did not exist. In July, 1721, we find Lady Mary quite out of patience with their conjugal affection.

"Mrs. Hervey and her dear spouse," she writes to her sister Lady Mar, "visited me twice or thrice a day, and were perpetually cooing in my rooms. I was complaisant a great while; but (as you know) my talent has never lain much that way. I grew at last so weary of those birds of paradise, I fled to Twickenham as much to avoid their persecutions as for my own health." *

Hervey would indeed have been hard to please had he shown early and confirmed neglect of such a wife. Lady Louisa herself concedes that

"By the attractions she retained in age she must have been singularly captivating when young, gay, and handsome; and never was there so perfect a model of the finely polished, high-bred, genuine woman of fashion. Her manners had a foreign tinge which some called affected, but they were gentle, easy, dignified, and altogether exquisitely pleasing."

And Lord Chesterfield said the word "pleasing" always reminded him of her, "who not only pleased herself, but was the cause of pleasing in others."

Like all "sprigs of quality" in those days, the Herveys were often at Bath, and some of Lady

* "Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu," vol. i. p. 457.

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Hervey's * letters to Mrs. Howard give amusing glimpses of the humours of the place.

"Lord Peterborough is here," she writes in June, 1725, "and has been so some time, though by his dress one would believe he had not designed to make any stay, for he wears boots all day, and as I hear must do so, having brought no shoes with him." [Boots were then considered only suitable for riding gear.] "It is a comical sight to see him, with his blue ribbon and star, and a cabbage under each arm, or a chicken in his hand, which, after he himself has purchased at market, he carries home for his dinner."

Some months later she gives the same correspondent a little family news:

"Arm yourself with faith to believe me when I tell you that Bab, our own lean, pale-faced Bab" [her sister-in-law, Lady Barbara Hervey], "has been queen of a ball, and has been the object of sighs, languishments, and all things proper on such occasions: and to surprise you yet more, I must inform you that her flirt is master of ten thousand pounds a year. I do not doubt but that Lady Bristol will tell you of it, for she is brimful of that (and cases of quadrille)." †

Lady Bristol, who had an imperious and uncertain temper, and piqued herself on her power of saying sharp things, was no doubt occasionally dictatorial to her beautiful daughter-in-law, who may not always have taken her caprices patiently. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu puts the case after

* In 1723 her husband succeeded to the title by the death of his brother Carr.

† "Letters to and from Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk," vol. i. p. 195.

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her own peculiar fashion: "All our acquaintances are now mad," she tells her sister: "they do such things! such monstrous and stupendous things! Lady Hervey and Lady Bristol have quarrelled in such a polite manner that they have given one another all the titles so liberally bestowed amongst the ladies at Billingsgate."

It would take a less "lively" pen than Lady Mary's to convince us that Lady Hervey, whose perfect good breeding and gracious dignity are recorded by all who knew her, ever descended to "Billingsgate," and if so, no further faith can be put in physiognomy! For never was sweeter or more gentle expression than that of her smiling face in the Strawberry Hill miniature. But that she did occasionally retaliate on Lady Bristol by a little malicious teasing, we have her own testimony: "Pray, when you are so kind as to write to me," she asks Mrs. Howard, "get sometimes one body, sometimes another to direct your letters. For curiosity being one of the reigning passions in *a certain person*" [Lady Bristol], "I love prodigiously both to excite and to baffle it."

In 1728 Lord Hervey tried to relieve the ill-health which was constitutional with him * (but

* His complaint was epilepsy; and to ward off its attacks he adopted that strict regimen to which Pope cruelly alludes in his

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which his father attributed to the use of "that detestable and poisonous plant, tea") by a journey to Italy—Lady Hervey and four young children remaining with Lord Bristol at Ickworth. In this seclusion she heard from Mrs. Howard, who was then at Hampton Court, and says in reply:

"The place your letter was dated from recalled a thousand agreeable things to my remembrance. I wish I could persuade myself that you regret them, or that you could think the tea-table more welcome if attended as formerly by the *Schatz*" [a nickname shared by Lord and Lady Hervey]. "If that were possible, it would be the means (and the only one at this time) to make me wish to exchange Ickworth for any other dwelling in England. I really believe a *frisela-tion* would be a surer means of restoring my spirits than the exercise and hartshorn I now make use of. I do not suppose that name still subsists; but pray let me know if the thing itself does, and if they meet in the same cheerful manner to sup as formerly. . . . I pass my mornings at present as much like those at Hampton Court as I can, for I divide them between walking and the people of the best

"Sporus," as, to disguise its traces, he is said to have painted his face. Lord Hailes (Preface to the Duchess of Marlborough's "Opinions") describes Hervey's "daily food" as "a small quantity of asses' milk and a flour biscuit; once a week he indulged himself with eating an apple." His own statement to Dr. Cheyne, his physician, is—"I never take any liquid but water or milk-tea; I eat no meat but the whitest, youngest, and tenderest—nine times in ten, nothing but chicken. I seldom eat any supper; if any, nothing absolutely but bread and water. Two days in the week I eat no flesh; my breakfast is dry biscuit, not sweet, and green tea. I have left off butter as bilious. I eat no salt, nor any sauce but bread sauce . . . the attacks made upon me by ignorance, impertinence, and gluttony are innumerable and incredible."

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sense of their time. But the difference is, my present companions are dead, and the others were quite alive."

In Mrs. Howard's reply she says: "Hampton was very different from the place you knew . . . *frizelation*, *flirtation*, and *dangleation* are now no more, and nothing less than a Lepell can restore them to life. To tell you my opinion freely, the people you now converse with" [her books] "are much more alive than any of your old acquaintance." In Lady Hervey's rejoinder, we see something of that home life at Ickworth which gives so much more true a clue to her character than the youthful gaieties with which she is generally associated:

"I have had frequent accounts from my lord of his being very much out of order abroad," she writes; "and at home I have had the pain of seeing and the fatigue of nursing Lady Ann" [her sister-in-law] "in a violent and for a great while dangerous distemper. I pass twelve or thirteen hours a day in her room, and dine by her bedside at seven or eight o'clock at night. I can never leave her whilst her fever is upon her, for she will take nothing but from me, nor do anything but at my request. Lord and Lady Bristol are in the greatest concern for her. The latter has been herself so ill that for many days she has not been able to bear going into her daughter's room. My spirits, which you know were once very good, are so much impaired, that I question if even Hampton Court breakfasts could recover them, or revive the *Schatz* who is extinguished in a fatigued nurse, a grieved sister, and a melancholy wife." *

* "Suffolk Correspondence," vol. i. p. 325.

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In a later letter Lady Hervey recommends Mrs. Howard to read "Cabala," which she says contains some "mighty pretty letters from the famous Earl of Essex, and very artful, clever ones from Sir Francis Bacon, who, though a sad fellow in his practice, was a very great man in theory."

Then in 1732 we have tidings of a startling reformation:

"Perhaps you imagine you can receive no news out of the country, but I shall convince you to the contrary by informing you that Lady Bristol has lived with me a whole fortnight with all civility and kindness. I have become first favourite. It would puzzle a poet to find anything soft, kind, and sweet enough to liken her to—down, turtle doves, and honey are faint images of her disposition.'

A collection of Lady Hervey's letters to a very different correspondent, the Rev. Edmund Morris, a country clergyman, tutor to her sons, was published by Murray in 1821. The first letter, written in 1742, is from Ickworth, which was almost always her home, and tells her correspondent that she has read Young's "Night Thoughts," recommended by him, and, though she admires the book, she does not mean to look at it again. "I do not like to look on the dark side of life," she adds, "and shall always be thankful to those who turn the bright side of that lantern to me." In the following spring, she tells Mr. Morris she is

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impatient to hear his "*approbation*" of Oldcastle's remarks on Bolingbroke's "History." "Perhaps I should have said *thoughts*," she continues, "but in this place I think those words synonymous. If they are not so I shall be disappointed and sorry, I don't say mortified, because Lord Hervey's commendations (to whom I am now reading it) have put me above that." She was soon to lose this much-prized companionship—the judgment and ability to which she had so long and so unaffectedly looked up. Lord Hervey died in August, and in the following October his wife writes:

"I see and feel the greatness of this last misfortune in every light, but I will struggle to the utmost; and though I know, at least I think, I can never be happy again, yet I will be as little miserable as possible, and will make use of the reason I have to soften, not to aggravate, my affliction."

It was chiefly for the sake of her children that Lady Hervey thus exerted herself; and some of them, at all events, repaid her passionate affection. Her eldest daughter, Lepel, at this time married to Constantine Phipps, afterwards Baron Mulgrave, was her pride and comfort. When she especially enjoys a book she recommends it to Mrs. Phipps, of whom she says:

"I should grudge myself anything so good without her participation. I hear from many people of her good looks

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and good spirits; of every other good that belongs to her I want neither information nor confirmation. May she have as much happiness as she deserves! This sounds very just, but is far from being very reasonable, considering the small stock of happiness there seems to be in the world: for I am wishing her much more than a Benjamin's portion."

Lady Hervey writes to Mr. Morris on every subject that can interest an intelligent woman. Politics, home and foreign; divinity, literature, her own classical studies (of which she modestly says she shall only peep into the vestibule open to the profane), all are discussed in turn, together with an occasional reminiscence of her old Court friends,* or a motherly message about her children. She is glad to hear that dear Frederick (afterwards the "most ir-reverend" Bishop of Derry) rides with his tutor: "There is nothing so likely to keep you both well as riding. I have found great benefit by it and therefore persist in it, though both the horse and the weather are very bad; the one is too calm, the other not calm enough."

Weeping philosophers have never been wanting; in September, 1744, Lady Hervey tells Mr. Morris he is "in a patriot fright," adding:

* Some of her characterizations maintain her reputation for wit. Lord Chesterfield, she says, had a "peculiar manner of stabbing with the genteelest compliments, which he could make more pointed than arguments." Mr. Pitt, when he ungraciously supported an address to the King, "has done a right thing with as ill an air as he could contrive it—like giving a purse by throwing it at one's head."

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"I wish you were here! You would make a trio in the pathetic political performance I hear every noon, which I sometimes hiss and sometimes parody, 'what should be great I turn to farce;' if I did not, the tragedy would be too deep to bear repeated every day . . . above five-and-twenty years ago I heard the same dreadful prophecies, from the same dreadful prophets, therefore, *dum spiro, sperabo;* my reason, my experience, and my spirits (which latter, I thank God, are not English), all concur in enabling me to do so. Had I cried for my country as long as Lord Bristol has been telling me I ought, I should not by this time have an eye left to cry with. And now I have two, and a mouth to laugh, which I am resolved to make use of as long as I can. . . . When I remind Lord Bristol how long it is since he bespoke my tears for my *ruined country*, he shakes his head, and says—'Ay, Madam! But it is nearer and nearer, and must happen at last.' According to his method, one should begin to weep for one's children as soon as they are born; for they must die at last, and every day brings them nearer to it."

To Lord Bristol, who had always loved her, she was a true and devoted daughter: she read to him, wrote for him, nursed him, drew him into playful discussions which she referred to her friends' arbitration, thus giving him a share in her correspondence; in short, she was the life of Ickworth, though herself, from a very early age, frequently suffering from severe attacks of hereditary gout.

She did not hesitate to give her reverend correspondent a little common-sense advice now and then. In 1745 he was presented to the living of

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Nutshalling, Hants, and she rejoiced warmly in his good fortune and admired his description of his new house and neighbourhood. "I approve of flowers and sweet shrubs for your garden," she adds, "but pray what have you to do with exotics? They are things of little beauty, great expense, and only matters of curiosity. Pray stick to what will make your *parterre* gay to the eye and sweet to the nose."

Lady Hervey's letters to Mr. Morris from the spring of 1745 to the autumn of 1747 were unfortunately lost. In October of the latter year we find her busy in her own garden, and her remarks give a clear idea of the progress of floriculture since her time:

"For the last three weeks I have been stuck as deeply in my garden as any of the plants I have set there, and I wish they may flourish half as well: for though I can't say I have run up in height, yet I have *spread* most luxuriantly. I have made a *rosery*. Perhaps you will ask what that is: it is a collection of all the sorts of roses there are, which amount to fifty.* This rosery perhaps may bring me to an untimely end, but it is a very pretty thing. I have made the whole design of it myself. In the middle of it, raised above all the others, is one of the most beautiful kind, who, conscious of the right to possess that place, does not *blush* in doing so."

Besides gardening at Ickworth, Lady Hervey

* Her anonymous editor observes that in 1821 the varieties numbered nearly five hundred.

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soon had building in London on her hands. She was altering her house in the Green Park after her own fancy; she had made the plan "entirely herself," she says in 1748, and it was to be executed in April.

"Perhaps you'll think I ought to begin on the first day of the month, but though it may be, and certainly is, contrary to all palladian rules, I think I ought to consider my own convenience and taste. . . . I hope, out of the ashes of my old house will soon arise a Phœnix house, where you will often eat as plain a dinner, see as fine a prospect, and as beautiful a verdure as at Nutshalling."

Still she has time and thoughts to spare for study. She asks Mr. Morris, "who are properly to be reckoned *the ancients?*" Who is the last author he would call ancient and the first he would call modern? Swift's "Battle of the Books" had set her wondering, and Lord Bristol could not help her; he had never thought about it. Next, having apparently disposed of the ancients, Lady Hervey attacks the "vulgarisms" of some of her "moderns."

"No one who has lived and conversed with the most polite people of the age, such as are Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Chesterfield, and such, I may say, as was Lord Hervey, but will wish, when they meet with those little vulgarisms, that they had been left out. . . . I would not have a word or an expression made use of that must have been picked up from the illiterate or the vulgar, or perhaps retained from the

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nursery; and of that kind are, *under the sun—in life—upon the face of the earth—the world cracking about our ears.*" *

Lady Hervey, it will be seen, carried a little of her fine-ladyism into her love of letters. But the mother in her warm heart triumphed over both the critic and the fine lady. "When I tell you that Mr. and Mrs. Phipps are here, yes, actually *here*," she writes a little later,

"you will not be surprised, sir, that I do not answer your last letter, or think of politics and controversy. When I enjoy society and friendship I am too happy with the present to look back to the past, and can think of no words but such as they utter, or can best prove my affection for them. They have a boy, too, who is the most surprising child I ever knew, though I remember what his mother was. In short, there is nothing wanting to my present happiness but the thoughts of its continuance. . . . If you think my letter short, think what I leave to make it even thus long, and then conclude that I am your sincere friend."

Her new house still occupies her; most people tell her she has done an indiscreet thing, and spent more money in building than her fortune warranted. "But it is for what I like better than any other expense whatever. If I am contented with two dishes rather than four, and with four servants rather than eight, and choose to make that

* What would this bright and refined lady say if she lived in an age when "awfully jolly" is uttered by ladies pretending to breeding, or when "thanks" is thrown at you like victuals to a dog? She would have been "quite too utterly" upset by such vulgarisms. —ED. *Temple Bar.*

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diminished expense into a good house, I please myself and injure no one."

She is sometimes a little satirical at the expense of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and his family. She never frequented Leicester House when in their occupation; she could not forgive their undutiful behaviour to her old master and mistress (though it was but a reproduction of the quarrels of *her* Prince and Princess of Wales with George I.), and she had no respect for their abilities:

"The Prince's family is an example of innocent and cheerful amusement. All this last summer they played abroad; and now, in the winter, in a large room they divert themselves at base-ball, a play all who are, or have been, schoolboys are well acquainted with. The ladies as well as gentlemen join in this amusement; and the latter return the compliment, in the evening, by playing for an hour at the old and innocent game of *push pin*, at which *they* chiefly excel (if they are not flattered) who ought in everything to precede. This innocence and excellence must needs give great joy, as well as great hopes, to all real lovers of their country and posterity."

Lady Hervey affords one more instance among hundreds, that the questions which occupy many minds in our own day presented themselves under precisely the same aspect to former generations. If she were living now she would certainly be claimed as a Ritualist, though probably a very sober and sensible one:



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"All those things which we call superstitions and innovations of the Roman Catholics were undoubtedly the practice of the primitive Christians; and though I believe the Papal power was an innovation, yet their ceremonies and faith were, to my apprehension, not so. Therefore I must stick to my old opinion, that the Reformation, as managed by Henry VIII., was warrantable according to Christianity; but that introduced by Luther and Calvin, and adopted in the time of Edward VI., was not quite so clearly founded in authority. I am sorry if in this we really disagree, because then 'tis probable I may be in the wrong. But if I am so, 'tis the fault of my judgment, and my will at least is ready for conviction; *errare possum, hæreticam esse nolo.*"

The Duchess of Richmond tempts Lady Hervey sorely by an invitation to Paris, but much though she wishes to go she will not leave Lord Bristol alone. Again, in the following spring, she is chained to her father-in-law's sick-bed. But at Ickworth there is always something to interest and soothe weary thoughts. The sunshine alone, she says, is "a better restorative than all that the *Pharmacopœia officinalis* can produce, and more exhilarating than all the wines of France." It gilds and beautifies the lawns and trees on which she loves to gaze, it irradiates her shrubs and flowers; and, while she looks on these, a concert is carolled for her by the birds.

"I have drawn a prodigious concourse of all kinds to the garden, and to my window in particular, by plenty of seeds, crumbs of bread, oatmeal, and all that can please their taste

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and solicit their abode. I have planted them a retreat in bad weather. They repay me by the most delightful music, and the first sound that strikes my ear in the morning is their melody. . . . I will enjoy this sweet place and quiet way of living as long as Lord Bristol lives, and am preparing a dwelling that will suit better with my purse, though not so well with my inclination. I have paid dear to make that dwelling *look* as like the country as I can; but I have been too much used to grass and trees to bear changing them for bricks and dust."

Her comments on books, both what she reads and what she will not read, are entertaining, and often very shrewd. Montesquieu's definition of the English Constitution—*une république qui se cache sous la forme de la monarchie*—charmed her; Harrington's "Utopia" she declined to look at.

"I think all those theoretic writers on a plan of perfection no better worth reading than *Scuderi* or any other romance-writer. In my opinion they both do a great deal of harm in their different ways; and when the one meets with a head turned to politics, and the other a disposition inclined to love, they leave neither at quiet till each is gratified, without the least degree of that perfection they set out in search of."

Her house is still a chief object of attention. Mr. Morris has been to see it, and wishes she had made a bow window. "Consider what would have been the consequence of it!" she remonstrates.

"Instead of those windows which now afford me as fine a view as possible, I should have had but one window that would have looked towards Chelsea and the country; from one of the oblique windows I should have looked into Sir

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John Cope's room, and have afforded him a view of mine. From the other I should have seen the Duke of Devonshire's house when the dust of Piccadilly permitted it."

In the autumn of 1750 Lady Hervey's long-projected visit to France was paid. Her old friend Lord Chesterfield, who had despatched his son to make the "grand tour," urged him to lose no time in waiting on her.

"To my great joy, because to your great advantage," he writes, "she passes all this winter in Paris. She has been bred all her life at Courts; of which she has acquired all the easy good breeding and politeness without the frivolousness. She has all the reading that a woman should have, and more than any woman need have; for she understands Latin perfectly well, though she wisely conceals it. As she will look upon you as her son, I desire that you will look upon her as my delegate: trust, consult, and apply to her without reserve. No woman ever had more than she has *le ton de la parfaitement bonne compagnie, les manières engageantes, et le je ne sçais quoi qui plaît.* Desire her to reprove and correct any and every the least error and inaccuracy in your manners, air, address. No woman in Europe can do it so well; none will do it more willingly, or in a more proper and obliging manner. She will not put you out of countenance by telling you of it in company, but either intimate it by some sign, or wait for an opportunity when you are alone together. She is also in the best French company, where she will not only introduce but puff you, if I may use so low a word." *

What a scolding Lady Hervey would have given his lordship for using it!

* "Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son," 12th edit., 1806, vol. iii. pp. 55, 56.

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During her Paris sojourn she apologizes to Mr. Morris for writing but seldom. The "fashionables" keep late hours at night, and have short mornings, as they dine at two o'clock. But if she could do him "any real, essential service by writing," she would borrow time not only from her pleasures, "but from my business, my rest, and my sleep." There can be no doubt she was a faithful ally; she says she never lost a friend but by death—and that those who remain shall never lose her while she lives, if they care to keep her.

Fontenelle is one of her Parisian companions:

"He has no mark of age but wrinkles, and a degree of deafness; but when by sitting near him you make him hear you, he answers with that liveliness and prettiness peculiar to himself. He often repeats and applies his own and other people's poetry very agreeably, but only as it is proper to the subject. He is ninety-two, and has the cheerfulness, liveliness, and even the taste and appetite of twenty-two!"

While in France Lady Hervey had an illness which made her so weak that she says she could "as easily have managed a cannon as a pen." But it was almost a pleasure to be ill among so many sympathizers. Her friends and acquaintances besieged her door all day long, and waited for hours in the afternoon to waylay the doctor or nurse and have the latest *bulletin*. Light quilts, couches, easy-chairs, all the things she could

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possibly require, were sent to her; and when she began to rally, "little chickens out of the country, new-laid eggs warm from the hen," the best varieties of wine, poured in upon her. "If you could guess all the kindness I meet with," she says, "you would neither blame nor wonder at my reluctance to quit these agreeable people."

She does return to England in 1752, however; but Lord Bristol's death having lessened her ties to home, in subsequent years she is often found writing from her friends' seats, she frequently goes backwards and forwards to her beloved France, and in 1756 she visits Scotland, apparently for the first time.

"This country is far from being so bad an one as English prejudice and English ignorance represent it," she says, writing from the neighbourhood of Roxburgh. And she praises the cornfields, the noble wooded hills, the beautiful rivers, and above all, the fish: "As for herrings and crabs, I do not believe I shall ever be able again to taste what is called so in England; they are not like the same fish. The salmon is the best I ever tasted; the trout, the smelts, the perch are incomparable." Such beef and mutton she never ate before. But the fruit—that, indeed, is "little and indifferent."

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Her descriptions of the Duke of Roxburghe's, Lord Haddington's, and Lord Hopetoun's seats are very minute and eulogistic.

"I have seen many more fine places," she continues; "the worst thing in Scotland is its capital, which is a frightful dirty town, though paved as well as St. James's Square. I like the people in general. They are sensible and learned, and have a very cheerful heartiness and good humour about them."

Her admiration for the Great Frederick would have satisfied Carlyle. "There is no one but the King of Prussia worth thinking of," she says in 1757:

"What a persevering spirit, what courage, what sagacity, how able a legislator at home, how formidable and humane an enemy abroad! A pattern and a model of arts and sciences! In short, something in the great scale of beings between a man and a deity; and whatever the weak admiration for antiquity may be in general, I prefer him to Cæsar, and consequently very much before Alexander. He has the virtues of both without their vices."

As years pass on, her letters become sadder and more grave in tone. Her health was broken; her children were scattered; the diplomatic service and the army had drawn her sons out of England, and often into danger which racked her nerves and oppressed her spirits. Her old friends were falling by her side, and almost every letter records a loss.

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"These are the misfortunes of long life," she says, "and which in old age cannot be repaired. One can hardly then make acquaintance, certainly not friends. Indeed, with all the improvements you talk of, that of friendship is not one. You hardly now ever hear it named; *connections* is the word, and the thing; these last for one, two, or perhaps even three sessions of Parliament, for on them depend all those *connections*."

Nevertheless, the accession of George III. gave her pleasure. "I have the best imaginable opinion of him," she says, "not from anything he does or says just now, but because I have a moral certainty that he was in his nursery the honestest, truest, good-natured child that ever lived; and you know my old maxim, that qualities never change. What the child was, the man most certainly is, in spite of temporary appearances."

She still exerted herself occasionally to see and entertain those who wished to visit her. To Mr. Morris's children she was thoughtfully kind; and some cheerful and accomplished sisters named Stanley were much with her; but she was rather shy of the new generation:

"The little understanding I have is worn very thin indeed," she says in 1764. "I am a mere rag, and I dare say the Miss Stanleys have no notion that I ever had any liveliness about me. They have a great deal. I like them extremely, and should be happy in their acquaintance, if my vanity did not throw cold water on that pleasure. In short, I confess I am mortified when new acquaintances see

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me as I now am. I don't mean as to my figure, but as to my understanding, which is full as old and as grey as the other. Don't laugh at me for my vanity. We all have our share of it in some shape or degree, and, take the species as it is, ready made, I question whether vanity is not the most general and powerful motive of the best and most agreeable things we do. *La vertu n'iroit pas loin si la vanité ne lui tenoit pas compagnie.* All rational creatures are either ashamed or proud of what they say or do. The vanity is equal in each case."

In June, 1768, in the course of a more than usually cheerful letter in which Lady Hervey spoke of her intention of going to Old Windsor, to Ickworth, and thence to drink her "Sunning Hill waters," she told her old friend she did not fear death, "but the way to it;" the last sufferings—"sometimes protracted;" but "when once they are over, I do not question but to rise to a new and better life." It was her last letter to Mr. Morris. On the 2nd of September she died at her town house; and she was spared the final agony she had dreaded. Her son Augustus was with her, and told Mr. Grenville that the day before her death "she squeezed my hand, and said, 'Poor dear Augustus,' and never spoke afterwards. She felt, thank God! no pain whatever." *

Horace Walpole, some of whose pleasantest letters were addressed to her, wrote to Sir Horace

* "The Grenville Papers and Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 357.

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Mann a few weeks after her death: "Lady Hervey, one of my great friends, died in my absence. She is a great loss to several persons; her house was one of the most agreeable in London; and her own friendliness, good breeding, and amiable temper had attached all that knew her. Her sufferings, with the gout and rheumatism, were terrible, and yet never could affect her patience, or divert her attention to her friends." *

Lady Hervey often moralized gently on "the vanity of human wishes," the cruel way in which time will sometimes mock one's little plans, and hopes, and achievements. She did not foresee that her own case was destined to be very much in point. In 1774 Walpole wrote to the Rev. William Cole:

"Lord Bristol got his mother's house from his brother" [Augustus] "by persuading her he was in love with it. He let it in a month after she was dead—and all her favourite pictures and ornaments, which she had ordered not to be removed, are mouldering in a garret!" †

* "Letters of Horace Walpole," edited by Peter Cunningham, vol. v. p. 129.

† Ibid., vol. vi. p. 82.

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# LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

"SHE quarrelled with Pope and had something to do with vaccination," is said to have been the concise reply of a Girton girl appealed to for an account of the subject of this memoir.

But there are other things worth remembering of the remarkable woman, who so justly predicted that in forty years' time her letters would be as well known as those of Madame de Sévigné, and who, it has been suggested, also resembled her in lavishing affection and wit on a somewhat unresponsive daughter.

Mary, eldest child of Evelyn Pierrepont * and Lady Mary Fielding,† was born in 1689. She was allied through both parents to the aristocracy of intellect as well as that of birth. Her paternal grandmother was one of the Evelyns of West

* Afterwards fifth Earl of Kingston; made Earl of Dorchester by Queen Anne in 1706, and Duke of Kingston by George I. in 1715.

† Daughter of the third Earl of Denbigh.

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Dean, Wiltshire;* Villiers, the witty Duke of Buckingham, was her great-uncle; the mother of Beaumont, the dramatist, was a Pierrepont; Henry Fielding was Lady Mary's second cousin.

She lost her mother when she was only four years old, a misfortune which undoubtedly had an injurious effect on her future life, as her imperious and impetuous character more than ordinarily needed gentle and sympathetic control; and her father (said by Lady Mary to have been faithfully though unconsciously portrayed by Richardson in Sir Thomas Grandison) treated his four children with more than "a little wholesome neglect."

One one occasion, however, Lord Kingston somewhat whimsically evinced his pride in "the flower of the flock." A man of fashion, and a prominent Whig, he was necessarily a member of the Kit-Cat Club. At a meeting called to choose "toasts for the year," he nominated his daughter, then seven years old, alleging that she was prettier than any other candidate. The rules of the club forbidding the election of an unknown beauty, Lady Mary was sent for, and, dressed in her smartest attire, had her first intoxicating draught of flattery and admiration. Her health

* Her cousin John Evelyn notes in his "Diary" her "prodigious memory."

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was drunk, her claim allowed, her name engraved, according to custom, on a drinking-glass. She was the little queen of the hour. She afterwards spoke of this day as the happiest of her life, and said that her "sensations amounted to ecstasy."*

Flat and tame must have seemed the return to ordinary routine under the direction of a "humdrum old governess," good and pious indeed, but, according to her pupil, quite without capacity for her task. This disadvantage Lady Mary soon set herself to remedy. After her mother's death she was much at West Dean, in the care of her grandmother Mrs. Pierrepont, whose good memory she inherited, and who, doubtless, encouraged her taste for study. West Dean was a "solemn house," with all the country pomp of stately terraces, wide bowling greens, and secluded avenues, where the precociously thoughtful child could brood undisturbed over the ponderous romances of which to the end of her days she cherished an affectionate remembrance. Fiction naturally first attracted her, but did not satisfy her long; and she says that when she spent five or six hours a day in her father's library, and was supposed to be reading poems and stories, she

* Lord Kingston perpetuated the memory of her triumph by having her portrait painted for the club-room.

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was, amongst other studies, beginning to teach herself Latin. At a later stage she acknowledges some assistance from Bishop Burnet, but he was not her first confidant.

One of her most intimate friends was Anne Wortley, a beautiful and intelligent girl, in whose apartments Lady Mary met her elder brother, Edward Wortley Montagu.* She is said to have been only fourteen at their first meeting (he was ten or twelve years her senior), and to have astonished him even more by her conversational powers and her taste for his favourite classics than by her striking beauty. They talked of *Quintus Curtius*, with whom she was unacquainted, and in a few days Mr. Wortley sent her a superb edition of his works, with a poetical inscription in terms of high, if somewhat stilted, admiration.

* They were the children of Sidney Montagu (son of the first Earl of Sandwich) and the heiress of Sir Francis Wortley, whose name he took. Lady Bute described Mr. Montagu (her grandfather) as "a large rough-looking man in a large flapped hat, talking very loud and swearing boisterously at his servants. Beside him sat a venerable figure, meek and benign of aspect, with silver locks overshadowed by a black velvet cap. This was his brother, Dean Montagu, who every now and then fetched a deep sigh and cast his eyes upward as if beseeching Heaven to pardon the profane language he condemned but durst not reprove."—"Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu." Edited by Lord Wharncliffe, with memoir, etc., by W. Moy Thomas, and "Introductory Anecdotes" by Lady Louisa Stuart. Bell and Sons, 1887. Vol. i. p. lxxix.

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On her part, no doubt, Lady Mary was immensely flattered by so much attention from a man who had found a place in the brilliant group of wits, scholars, and statesmen already known to her as her father's guests, and whose society had for her the strongest fascination.

Edward Wortley was the intimate friend of Steele, Addison, Congreve, and Garth. The second volume of the *Tatler*, to which he is believed to have been a contributor, is dedicated to him in these words: "I do not know how to say a more affectionate thing to you than to wish that you may be always what you are." He was not supposed to be a "ladies' man" by any means, and if, as some assert, he was engaged when he first saw Lady Mary, he yet could never have wholly lost the impression made by that meeting, for he was soon associated in the correspondence between her and Anne Wortley, at first as a referee on Latin and literature, but soon as the author of the letters nominally composed by his sister.

On Anne Wortley's early death the thin disguise was thrown aside, and he appeared as a persistent, jealous, exacting lover, doubtful not only of his bright and wilful lady's affection, but whether he might not be "cursed with a granted prayer"

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should she after all consent to become his. Lady Mary was not without misgivings herself; there were other aspirants for her hand; she was in no hurry to decide; and it really seems to have been somewhat against the better judgment of both that they finally arrived at an understanding, and Mr. Wortley laid his suit before Lady Mary's father, then become Lord Dorchester. Here an unexpected difficulty arose. Mr. Wortley's character, birth, and fortune were all satisfactory, but his views as to settlements were not. He offered, says Lady Louisa Stuart * in her vivacious "Introductory Anecdotes," to make the best provision in his power for Lady Mary, but steadily refused to settle his landed property upon a son who, for aught he knew, might prove unworthy to possess it; "might be a spendthrift, a villain, or an idiot." †

Lord Dorchester's opposition did not separate the lovers. Steele became their confidant, and his "Prue" so far relaxed her usual austerity as to allow them to meet in her house in Bloomsbury Square, and to drive with Lady Mary in Hyde Park, where Mr. Wortley would be waiting to

* Daughter of Lady Bute, and granddaughter of Lady Mary.

† This was curiously prophetic. Edward Wortley Montagu was certainly the two former, and though not an idiot, it is charitable to suppose him to have been a little mad.

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snatch a momentary interview. He had many rivals, and, grave, dignified, and formal himself, was evidently tormented by the caprices of his beloved, who on her part liked and respected him too much to let him go, enjoyed disobeying a father who she considered had neglected her, but still doubted much whether she and Mr. Wortley were really calculated to be happy together, and chafed under his cautions and rebukes.

"Every time you see me you give me a fresh proof of your not caring for me," he says. "Yet I beg that you will see me once more. . . . Write a line this evening or early to-morrow. If I don't speak plain, do you understand what I write? Tell me how to mend the style if the fault is in that. I always comprehend your expressions, but would give a great deal to know what passes in your heart."

There is a touching passage in one of her replies:

"I have not the usual pride of my sex; I can bear being told I am in the wrong, but tell it me gently. Perhaps I have been indiscreet. I came young into the hurry of the world. A great innocence and undesigning gaiety may possibly have been construed as coquetry and a desire of being followed, though never meant by me. I cannot answer for the reflections that may be made on me. All who are malicious attack the careless and the defenceless; I own myself to be both. . . . Would any woman but me renounce all the world for one, or would any man but you be insensible to such a proof of sincerity?" *

* "Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu." Bell and Sons, 1887. Vol. i. p. 63. (From which edition all subsequent extracts are taken, unless otherwise indicated.)



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"I will part with anything for you, *but* you," she writes at another time.

A climax was put to the perplexities of the lovers when Lord Dorchester tried to force his daughter into a marriage with a suitor, whose name is not mentioned, rich and amenable to his proposed father-in-law's views, but whom Lady Mary declared she detested. In vain she appealed against her threatened fate; in vain she promised to marry no one else if only she might be allowed to dismiss Mr. ——. In that case, said her father, she should be banished to a remote country residence during his lifetime, and on his death be cut off with a small annuity. Arrangements for the wedding went calmly on, settlements were drawn up, wedding garments bought, the day fixed, and on its eve she cut the Gordian knot (it is supposed with the connivance of her brother Lord Kingston and her uncle William Fielding, who had been on her side in the family quarrel) by arranging to elope with Mr. Wortley. Not without many scruples and alarms; she repeatedly assures him that her father will never forgive them, and that she will be a penniless bride:—

"I tremble for what we are doing. Are you sure you will love me for ever? Shall we never repent? I fear and I hope. I foresee all that will happen on this occasion. I shall

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incense my family in the highest degree. The generality of the world will blame my conduct, and the relations and friends of —— [the rejected suitor] will invent a thousand stories of me; yet 'tis possible you may recompense everything to me."

From West Dean, whither Lady Mary was sent with her brother, she made her escape, and was married in August, 1712. Two months later she writes from Nottinghamshire, where she remained with some friends during Mr. Wortley's absence:—

"I don't know very well how to begin; I am perfectly unacquainted with a proper matrimonial style. After all, I think 'tis best to write as if we were not married at all. I lament your absence as if you were still my lover, and am impatient to hear you are got safe to Durham, and have fixed a time for your return. . . . I check myself when I grieve for your absence by remembering how much reason I have to rejoice in the hope of passing my whole life with you. I am afraid of telling you that I return thanks for it to Heaven, because you will charge me with hypocrisy. But you are mistaken. I assist every day at public prayers in this family, and never forget in my private ejaculations how much I owe to Heaven for making me yours."

It was an ill response on the part of a bridegroom to such a letter as this to allow days to pass without reply or even acknowledgment. Mr. Wortley had at that time, Lady Mary said long afterwards, "the sort of passion for me that would have made me invisible to all but himself had it been in his power;" but he certainly cared little for her peace of mind or ordinary comfort.

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"'Tis the most cruel thing in the world," she writes, "to think one has reason to complain of what one loves. How can you be so careless? Is it because you don't love writing? You should remember I want to know you are safe at Durham. I shall imagine you have had some fall from your horse or ill accident by the way, without regard to probability. There is nothing too extravagant for a woman and a lover's fears."

A little later, after telling him that she has been very ill, but would not allow her maid to write instead of her lest he should be needlessly alarmed, she concludes, "I wish you would write again to Mr. Phipps, for I don't hear of any money, and am in the utmost necessity for it." Her next letter is from Hinchinbrook, where, she says, "I walked two hours on the terrace . . . a good-natured robin redbreast kept me company almost all the afternoon, with so much good humour and humanity as gives me faith for the piece of charity ascribed to these little creatures in the 'Children in the Wood.'" All her letters of this period have the same tone of half-playful melancholy. She knows he does not expect ("nor even so much as desire") to hear from her so often, but "idleness is the root of all evil. I write and read till I can't see, and then I walk. Sleep succeeds, and thus my whole time is divided. . . . I see nothing, but I think of everything, and indulge my imagination, which is chiefly employed on you."

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A strange and sudden change of surroundings for one who, only a few months before, had been presiding over her father's gay and crowded town house,* so beset by admirers as to drive Mr. Wortley, looking on from a distance, into wrath and despair!

Six months later, in 1713, the young couple are still without any settled home, and are again apart. Mr. Wortley, engrossed by parliamentary duties, seems to have left Lady Mary to do the best she could for herself as to a residence.

One house which he suggested was found to be unfurnished; the landlord of another was in France; of a third she hears that it is half in ruins and the furniture locked up!

During this period of solitary discomfort she lost her brother, Lord Kingston, at the age of twenty-one. He was an amiable young man, to whom she was sincerely attached, and was carried off by small-pox with such appalling suddenness that she did not even hear of his illness until she was informed of his death. After this event she writes to Mr. Wortley:—

* Not the least onerous of the young hostess's duties was carving for all the guests. She took lessons in the art three times a week, and dined at an earlier hour herself that she might give undivided attention to her task.

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"Your absence increases my melancholy so much I fright myself with imaginary horrors, and shall always be fancying dangers for you while you are out of my sight. I am afraid of Lord H.; I am afraid of everything. There wants but little of my being afraid of the small-pox for you, so unreasonable are my fears, which, however, proceed from an unlimited love. If I lose you—I cannot bear that 'if,' which I bless God is without probability. But since the loss of my poor unhappy brother I dread every evil."

Letter after letter is in this strain of wounded affection. When anxiety for the health of their first child * is added to her other troubles, she vainly appeals to her husband for sympathy:

"I found our poor boy not so well as I expected. He is very lively, but so weak that my poor heart aches about him very often. I hope you are well—I should be glad to hear so, and what success you have in your business. . . . I am in abundance of pain about our dear child. Though I am convinced in my reason 'tis both silly and wicked to set one's heart too fondly on anything in this world, yet I cannot overcome myself so far as to think of parting with him with resignation. I hope and I beg of God he may live to be a comfort to us both."

Again—

"I know very well that nobody was ever teased into a liking, but I cannot any longer forbear telling you I think you use me very unkindly. . . . I am very sensible I parted from you in July, and it is now the middle of November. As if this was not hardship enough, you do not tell me you are sorry for it. You write seldom and with so much indifference as shows you hardly think of me at all. I

* Edward Wortley Montagu, born in 1713.

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complain of ill health, and you only say you hope it is not so bad as I make it. You never inquire after your child. I would fain flatter myself you have more kindness for him and for me than you express."

Mr. Ropes, in the introductory sketch to his admirable selection from Lady Mary's letters, says that she, like many of her masculine contemporaries, "developed the intellectual and practical side of her nature at the expense of the emotions."

"One may say that she was all her days a traveller, regarding the world of life as she did the lands through which she journeyed. The joys of existence were but the chance of a fine day, or a good inn on the road; its griefs but the breaking of a wheel, the discomfort of a hovel—all alike to be borne with quietly because they would be almost forgotten to-morrow. Friends, relations even, were but travelling companions—here to-day, gone to-morrow."*

This excellently illustrates one side of her character, the side most prominent in later life, but induced, or at all events unduly developed, by circumstances. And after reading her first simple, sincere, and pathetic letters to Mr. Wortley, one cannot help believing with Leigh Hunt, when alluding to a girlish fancy she had for founding "an English nunnery," that—

"There was one period of her life at which it depended

* "Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Select Passages from her Letters." Edited by Arthur R. Ropes, M.A. Seeley and Co., 1892. Introductory Sketch, p. 31.

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upon the turn of a die whether our heroine's vivacities might not all have compressed themselves, not indeed into a lady-abbess, but into a very good lady-wife. She only required to have been a little better matched in order to have met the mutual good-will and humanities of the wedded life more than halfway."*

Solitude and dulness were soon exchanged for a state of lively apprehension. Queen Anne died in August, 1714, and after the proclamation of George I., Lady Mary writes from Middlethorpe that all the principal men have taken post for London, and the hapless ladies are in fear of Jacobite incursions, and hear rumours of a hostile fleet having been sighted.

"You made me cry two hours last night," she continues. "I cannot imagine why you use me so ill—for what reason you continue silent when you know at any time your silence cannot fail of giving me a great deal of pain; and now to a higher degree because of the perplexity I am in, without knowing where you are, what you are doing, or what to do with my dear little boy."

Lord Carlisle's daughters having opened the doors of Castle Howard to Lady Mary and her child, she discusses Mr. Wortley's prospects in the new reign:—

"I am glad you think of serving your friends; I hope it will put you in mind of serving yourself. If it was possible to restore liberty to your country or limit the encroachments

* "Men, Women, and Books," by Leigh Hunt. Smith, Elder and Co., 1870. Page 318.

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of the prerogative by reducing yourself to a garret, I should be pleased to share so glorious a poverty with you. But as the world is and will be, 'tis a sort of duty to be rich, that it may be in one's power to do good. No modest man ever did or ever will make his fortune. . . . The ministry is like a play at Court. There's a little door to get in, and a great crowd without, shoving and thrusting who shall be foremost. People who knock others with their elbows, disregard a little kick of the shins, and still thrust heartily forwards, are sure of a good place. Your modest man stands behind in the crowd, is shoved about by everybody, his clothes torn, almost squeezed to death, and sees a thousand get in before him that don't make so good a figure as himself. I believe you deserve everything and are capable of everything; but no one else will believe in you if they see you get nothing."

Mr. Wortley's election for Westminster and appointment as a Lord of the Treasury in 1715, brought his wife once more to Court. She found changes, not to her liking, in the family circle. Her sister Frances was married to the Earl of Mar, a man whom Lady Mary disliked and distrusted; her father (become Duke of Kingston) had married Lady Belle Bentinck, daughter of the Earl of Portland—a famous beauty, and younger than his own daughters. Lady Mary wrote a brief and acrid account of the new Court, in which she styles the King "an honest blockhead," and speaks of the fiery temper and arrogance of the Prince of Wales. The Princess, she says—

"was esteemed a German beauty, and had that genius which qualified her for the government of a fool and made her

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despicable in the eyes of all men of sense; I mean a low cunning, which gave her an inclination to cheat all the people she conversed with, and often cheated herself in the first place, not having understanding enough to observe that falsehood in conversation, like red on the face, should be used very seldom and very sparingly, or they destroy that interest they are designed to heighten."

Lady Louisa Stuart quotes from her grandmother's journal an odd story of one of the royal parties. Wishing to leave earlier than usual, to fulfil some particular engagement, Lady Mary made her excuses to the King, who received them with many complimentary remonstrances. At the foot of the grand staircase she met Secretary Craggs, who inquired "If the company were put off?" She told him why she was going away, and how the King had urged her to remain; on which Mr. Craggs caught her up in his arms like a child, ran upstairs with her, deposited her in the ante-chamber, and silently vanished. The pages then opened the inner doors, and before she had recovered breath she was again in the royal presence. "*Ah! la revoilà!*" cried the King, thanking her for her obliging change of mind. Fluttered and off her guard, she replied, "Oh Lord, Sir, I have been so frightened!" and told him the whole story. In the midst of her recital the doors again flew open, and Mr. Secretary

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Craggs was announced, apparently just arrived. "*Mais comment donc, M. Craggs,*" said the King, "*est-ce que c'est l'usage de ce pays de porter des belles comme un sac de froment?*" "There is nothing I would not do for Your Majesty's satisfaction," answered the Minister, with a low bow. But turning to the tell-tale, he whispered a bitter reproach, enforced with a round oath. "Which I durst not resent," concludes her narrative, "for I had drawn it upon myself. And indeed I was heartily vexed at my own imprudence."

In 1716 began the travelling to which Lady Mary had from her earliest youth looked forward as the most delightful mode of life. Mr. Wortley was made Ambassador to the Porte, with the purpose of mediating between the Turks and Imperialists, and his wife and child accompanied him.*

During a brief delay in Rotterdam she was delighted by its cleanliness, assuring Lady Mar that she walked all over the town in her slippers, "without receiving one spot of dirt;" and she quickly detected a salient point in the national

* It is now tolerably certain that the famous letters from which all accounts of her travels in the East have been gathered were not strictly her genuine correspondence, but, after the literary fashion of the day (carried to an unpardonable length by Pope), were "dressed for publication," and in some cases compiled from her copious diary.

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character, warning her sister that if her own letters are found amusing she will demand a full return in London news—"It is not from Holland you must expect a disinterested offer. I can already write enough in the style of Rotterdam to make a good bargain." She enjoyed travelling from Ratisbon to Vienna "in one of those little vessels that they very properly call wooden houses, having in them almost all the conveniences of a palace—stoves, kitchens, etc. They are rowed by twelve men and move with incredible swiftness." But the capital itself disappointed her by the narrowness of its streets and the "intolerable inconvenience" of living in flats—so that "the apartments of a Minister of State are divided but by a partition from those of a tailor or a shoemaker." She was astonished at the extravagant dress of the leaders of fashion—"heads of hair too large to go into a moderate tub," and "whalebone petticoats which cover some acres of ground;" was captivated by the lovely Empress Elizabeth, whom she described as a compound of Juno, Venus, and the Graces; and was infinitely amused by the Empress-Mother Eleanora, "a princess of great virtue and goodness, who piques herself so much on a violent devotion that she is perpetually performing extraordinary acts of

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penance without having ever done anything to deserve them."

Lady Mary gives a slyly suggestive account of the looks of the ladies of Hanover (whither the Embassy digressed to consult the King), who, she says, have jet-black hair and eyebrows, rosy cheeks, snowy foreheads, and scarlet lips.

"These perfections never leave them till the hour of their death, and have a very fine effect by candle-light, but I could wish they were handsome with a little more variety. They resemble one another as much as Mrs. Salmon's waxwork Court of Great Britain, and are in as much danger of melting away by too nearly approaching the fire, which they for that reason carefully avoid."

At last, arriving at Adrianople, she found herself "in a new world," and her Whig principles were much fortified by the spectacle of "the blessed condition of the most absolute monarch on earth,* who owns no law but his will," yet, "the government being in the hands of the army, is as much a slave as any of his subjects, and trembles at a janissary's frown." The appearance of subjection is indeed great, a Minister being spoken to on bended knee. But, should he displease the people—

"in three hours' time he is dragged even from his master's arms. None of our harmless calling names! They cut off

* Sultan Achmet III.

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his hands, head, and feet, and throw them before the palace gate with all the respect in the world. . . . I cannot help wishing that Government would send hither a shipload of your passive obedient men that they might see arbitrary government in its clearest light, where it is hard to judge whether the prince, people, or ministers are most miserable."

Here Lady Mary first assumed the Turkish dress, familiar now in her often-engraved portraits —a confection of rose-coloured damask, white silk gauze, green and gold brocade, ermine, gold fringe, and diamond buttons, crowned by a bouquet of jewels in natural colours for the hair, her account of which reads like a page from the "Arabian Nights."

She laughs at the popular idea of the seclusion of Turkish women, and says she regards them as the only free people in the empire. "'Tis true the law permits the Turk four wives. But there is no instance of a man of quality that makes use of this liberty, or a woman of rank that would suffer it."

To Pope she writes that the customs and the dress of those around her elucidate many passages in his Homer. Princesses still embroider at the loom, surrounded by their maidens; the Grecian dances are the same as that of Diana on the banks of the Eurotas; the snowy veil of Helen "is still fashionable;" and she never sees half a dozen old pashas, with their reverend beards, sitting basking

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in the sun, without being reminded of good King Priam and his councillors.

While at Adrianople Lady Mary studied Oriental languages and customs closely, and her attention was directed to inoculation for small-pox. A set of old women make it their business to perform the operation every autumn, she says :—

"People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the small-pox. They make parties of fifteen or sixteen for the purpose. . . . The French Ambassador says that they take the small-pox here by way of diversion, as they take the waters in other countries. There is no example of any one that has died in it. You may believe that I am very well satisfied of the safety of the experiment since I intend to try it on my dear little son. I am patriot enough to take pains to bring this useful invention into fashion in England, and I should not fail to write to some of our doctors very particularly about it, if I knew any of them that I thought had virtue enough to destroy such a considerable branch of their revenue for the good of mankind. . . . Perhaps if I live to return I may, however, have courage to war with them."

Lady Mary's feeling on the question was intensified by personal experience of its importance, her brother having, as we have seen, died of small-pox. She was herself attacked by the malady before leaving England, and has described her distress and terror in one of her "Town Eclogues" (verses now rarely looked at, and which but for the interest felt in their author would speedily

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have been forgotten)—but she escaped with the loss of her eyelashes, which is said to have given an expression of fierceness to her otherwise very beautiful eyes. She did bravely enter on the crusade against ignorance and prejudice hinted at in this letter, but it cost her dear; according to Lady Louisa Stuart, she protested that for four or five years succeeding her arrival in England she seldom passed a day without regretting her patriotic undertaking.

"She vowed she would never have attempted it if she had foreseen the vexation, the persecution, the obloquy it brought upon her. The clamours raised against the practice, and of course against her, were beyond belief. The faculty rose in arms to a man, foretelling the most disastrous consequences. The clergy descanted from their pulpits on the impiety of thus seeking to take events out of the hands of Providence. The common people hooted at her as an unnatural mother, who had risked the lives of her children. And notwithstanding supporters among the higher classes, headed by the Princess of Wales,* who stood by her firmly, some of her acquaintances joined the outcry. . . . The four great physicians deputed by Government to watch the progress of inoculation in the case of Lady Mary's daughter,† betrayed such incredulity as to its success, and such an unwillingness to have it succeed, that she never liked to leave the child alone with them one second, lest it should suffer from their interference." ‡

* Caroline of Anspach, afterwards Queen.

† Her son had been successfully "engrafted" at Belgrade in 1718.

‡ After this experience it was natural that Lady Mary should

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This, however, is anticipating Lady Mary's experiences. While still in the East she observed everything, and admired much that she saw, especially the beauty of many of the women. Fatima, the wife of the Kiyáya, must have rivalled the "Fair Persian."

"Her beauty effaced everything. I have seen all that has been called lovely either in England or Germany, and never saw anything so gloriously beautiful, nor can I recollect a face that would have been taken notice of near hers. She stood up to receive me with a sweetness full of majesty that no Court breeding could ever give. . . . I was so struck with admiration that I could not for some time speak to her, being wholly taken up in gazing. That surprising harmony of features! That lovely bloom of complexion! The unutterable enchantment of her smile! But her eyes! Large and black, with all the soft languishment of the blue! every turn of her face discovering some new charm!"

The two young daughters and twenty maiden attendants on this Eastern divinity were also "lovely as angels." They danced, played, and sang for their enraptured guest's entertainment, censed her with amber from silver censers, served

greatly admire the mode of treating the physician, which she observed during her long residence in the Venetian States: "They make it his interest that the whole parish should be in good health, giving him a stated pension, collected by a tax on every house, on condition that he neither demands nor receives any fees, nor ever refuses a visit either to rich or poor. The last article would be very hard if we had as many vapourish ladies as in England; but these imaginary ills are entirely unknown here."



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her on their knees with coffee in the finest china, and presented her with embroidered handkerchiefs in a silver basket.

Lady Mary ventured to express some of the admiration which her hostess inspired, and proceeded to tell her "what a noise such a face as hers would make in London or Paris." "I can't believe you," replied Fatima; "if beauty was so much valued in your country as you say, they would never have suffered you to leave it."

Lady Mary assures her sister, Lady Mar, that she does not repeat this reply out of personal vanity, but to show Fatima's ready wit.

In her Turkish dress Lady Mary penetrated to the Exchange, "half a mile in length, and kept extremely neat," and observed the number and importance of the rich Jews, who, she says, are also the physicians, the stewards, and the interpreters of all the great men. Thence to the camp, where she found the tents "rather like palaces;" and then to the marble mosque of Selim I., with its two thousand lamps and four gilt towers.

Going with the Embassy to Constantinople, she pursued the same course of indefatigable and unprejudiced observation, studying the language and antiquities of the country, and finding certain points not on'y in its climate, but its laws, which

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she prefers to those of her own. In 1718 she writes :—

"I am now sitting, this present fourth of January, with the windows open, enjoying the warm shine of the sun (while you are freezing over a sad sea-coal fire), and my chamber set out with carnations, roses, and jonquils fresh from my garden. I am also charmed with many points of the Turkish law, to our shame be it spoken, better designed and better executed than ours. Particularly the punishment of convicted liars (triumphant criminals in our country, God knows); they are burnt on the forehead with a hot iron. How many white foreheads should we see disfigured—how many fine gentlemen would be forced to wear their wigs as low as their eyebrows were this law in practice with us!"

Soon after this letter was written Lady Mary's daughter * was born, at Pera. This she describes as a place so well representing the Tower of Babel, from the diverse nationalities of its inhabitants, that she knows several infants of three or four years old who speak Italian, French, Greek, Turkish, and Russian. Constantinople, on its seven hills of unequal height, she assures Lady Bristol, seems as large again as it is—

"showing an agreeable mixture of gardens, pine and cypress trees, palaces, mosques, and public buildings raised one above another, with as much beauty and appearance of symmetry as your ladyship ever saw in a cabinet adorned by the most skilful hands, jars showing themselves above jars, mixed with canisters, babies, and candlesticks. This is a

* Mary Wortley Montagu, afterwards Countess of Bute.

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very odd comparison, but it gives me an exact image of the thing."

Mr. Wortley was not successful as an ambassador. In a despatch of his, preserved at the Record Office, says Mr. Ropes, "he prides himself on telling the Turks 'plain truths,' a method not apt to soothe wounded susceptibilities." He received his first intimation of recall in a letter from Addison, gentle, courteous, and gracious, as might be expected from such a friend anxious to soften unacceptable tidings. In the summer of 1718 he left Constantinople with his family, and Lady Mary's letters trace the route of their slow progress homeward, always noting points of interest when they break the journey. She fell ill of fever at Lyons, and says to Lady Rich—

"You may judge how agreeable the journey has been to me, which did not need that addition to make me dislike it. I think nothing so terrible as objects of misery, except one had the God-like attribute of being capable to redress them; and all the country villages of France show nothing else. While the post-horses are changed, the whole town comes out to beg, with miserable starved faces and thin tattered clothes. . . . This is all the French magnificence till you come to Fontainebleau. There you begin to think the kingdom rich, when you are showed one thousand five hundred rooms in the King's hunting palace."

Through all Lady Mary's eager interest in attacking new studies and visiting fresh scenes there runs

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a vein of melancholy reflection, typified by her remark to the Abbé Conti, on reaching Dover :—

"After having read all that is to be found in the languages I am mistress of, and having decayed my sight by midnight studies, I envy the easy peace of mind of a ruddy milkmaid who, undisturbed by doubt, hears the sermon with humility every Sunday, having not confused the sentiments of natural duty in her head by the vain enquiries of the schools."

This seems almost a premonition of the many troubles and vexations—none the easier to bear because in some cases the result of her own imprudence—which followed Lady Mary's return to England. They were all employed with savage and unsparing vindictiveness to point Pope's attacks when declining friendliness had become open war. They were all, according to later and more impartial accounts, susceptible of far less injurious interpretation.

The first was her unlucky interposition in the financial affairs of M. Rémond, a French wit and versifier of good family but somewhat alarming parentage (his father was known as Rémond le Diable), of whom Saint-Simon has left a most unprepossessing portrait, though he allows him talent.* He was known to Lady Mary's friends, Lord Stair

* "Un petit homme avec un gros nez, de gros yeux ronds sortant, de gros vilains traits, et une voix enrouée. . . . Il avait beaucoup d'esprit, . . . il avait encore plus d'effronterie, d'opinion de soi, et de mépris des autres."

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and the Abbé Conti, and began to write to her while she was in Constantinople in the strain of "exalted gallantry" in which literary men at that time usually addressed women. On her way home they met in Paris, where Rémond formed one of the little circle surrounding Lady Mar, who had joined her husband, exiled because of his intrigues with the Jacobites, but more than suspected of dealing with and impartially betraying both parties, as his pleasing *sobriquet*, "Bobbing John," indicates. After meeting Lady Mary, Rémond's protestations of devotion grew more fervent, and were curiously mixed with entreaties for aid and advice in financial matters. This, most unfortunately, she gave him—"out of a high point of generosity for which I wish myself hanged," she told her sister Lady Mar—"flattering myself that I was doing a very heroic action in trying to make a man's fortune, though I did not care for his addresses."

She bought and sold South Sea Stock for Rémond with varying success—the frenzy for it was then (1720) at its height—but finally a considerable sum was lost, and he changed from adulator to vituperator, even accusing Lady Mary of detaining the money he had entrusted to her, and threatening her with exposure and the pub-

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lication of her letters, for which purpose he was about to visit England. He was evidently furious at his losses, and Lady Mary was nearly distracted at the thought of the whole discreditable affair coming to the knowledge of her upright, proud, somewhat censorious husband, and at the lampoons, satires, and scandal to which any rumour of the facts would give rise. The exact way in which matters were finally settled cannot be ascertained, but it is conjectured that Rémond did make his appeal to Mr. Wortley, and that Lady Mary then placed his letters in her husband's hands for her own justification, as they were all discovered endorsed by him. In the last, on which Mr. Wortley has written: "Mr. Rémond, after his return to Paris. His loss by the Mississippi and his small gain in England. Advises to realize"—this passage occurs:—

"I do not regret the climate or the society of England, but the conversation of a few persons, particularly yours, which I enjoyed but rarely. . . . I know that English ladies are incapable of friendship or love. I care little about the folly of the one, but I was very sensible of the pleasure of the other. I shall love you without exacting a return."

M. Rémond had certainly shown this disinterested affection in a singularly objectionable manner. But his letter disproves the complexion Lady Mary's enemies chose to put on the matter.

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At this time the Wortleys were living at Twickenham, to which they returned later, liking the neighbourhood well enough to buy a house there. Even then the suburbs of London were fast losing their rurality. "Twickenham," she writes, "is become so fashionable and the neighbourhood so much enlarged, that 'tis more like Tunbridge or the Bath than a country retreat." The friendship with Pope must have been rapidly on the wane, for Lady Mary writes to her sister :—

"I see sometimes Mr. Congreve and very seldom Mr. Pope, who continues to embellish his house. . . . He has made a subterranean grotto which he has furnished with looking-glass, and they tell me it has a very good effect."

"I am now at the same distance from London that you are from Paris," she tells Lady Mar, who was at Fontainebleau, "and could fall into solitary amusements with a good deal of taste, but I resist it as a temptation of Satan, and turn my endeavours to make the world as agreeable to me as I can, which is the true philosophy. . . . I ride a good deal, and have got a horse superior to any two-legged animal, he being without a fault. I work like an angel. I receive visits upon idle days, and I shade my life as I do my tentstitch, that is, make as easy transitions as I can from business to pleasure. The one would be too flaring and gaudy without some dark shades of t'other, and if I worked altogether in the dark colours you know 'twould be quite dismal."

This quiet life was varied by stag-hunts in Richmond Park with the Prince of Wales, in which she declared she had arrived at vast courage

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and skill, and was "as well pleased with it as with the acquisition of a new sense."

In 1726 the Duke of Kingston died.* He had long been reconciled to his daughter and son-in-law, but there is no trace of cordial intercourse between them in Lady Mary's letters. She considered that he had spoilt her brother's brief life by hurrying him into an unsuitable marriage for the sake of the bride's dower; and she greatly disliked his second wife. He had neglected his daughter in childhood, and endeavoured to coerce her into marrying a man she detested. It was hardly to be expected that his loss should affect her very severely. Family quarrels over money matters attended his death-bed: "I could not get my poor sister Gower † to act with me," Lady Mary says, "and mamma and I were in an

* Lady Bute could only remember seeing her grandfather once. She was playing in her mother's dressing-room when an elderly stranger, handsome and dignified, with an authoritative manner, abruptly entered, on which, to the child's great surprise, Lady Mary started up from the toilet-table and fell on her knees to ask his blessing. Lady Bute's next recollection in connection with him was the ceremony of the young Duchess of Kingston's "seeing company" after his funeral. The house was hung with black cloth. The Duchess, veiled in crape, sat upright in her state-bed under a black canopy. At its foot were ranged the Duke's grandchildren in profound silence. The only light in the room was from a single wax taper; and the visitors, dressed in mourning, approached the bed on tip-toe and departed with deep curtsies.

† Lady Gower herself died in 1727, and the Duchess of Kingston in 1728.

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actual scold when my poor father expired. She has shown a hardness of heart on this occasion that would appear incredible to anybody not capable of it themselves."

In the same year began the long series of annoyances and scandals which Lady Mary's extraordinary son brought on his parents.

"My blessed offspring has already made a great noise in the world," she writes to Lady Mar. "That young rake my son"—then thirteen years old—"took to his heels t'other day and transported his person to Oxford, being in his own opinion thoroughly qualified for the University. After a good deal of search we found and reduced him, much against his will, to the humble condition of a schoolboy. It happens very luckily that the sobriety and discretion is of my daughter's side. I am sorry the ugliness is so too, for my son grows extremely handsome."

In the following year Edward Wortley again disappeared, and it was several months before he could be found, in spite of rewards offered and searching inquiries made. This was at a time when a heavy sorrow had fallen on his mother in the insanity of her favourite sister, whose absence from England she repeatedly deplored, little thinking that her return thither would be even more painful to those who loved her. Lady Mar's married life had been very unhappy, and in the beginning of her illness she often declared that her husband's cruelty had driven her mad.

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Lord Grange, brother of the Earl of Mar, contested with Lady Mary the custody of his sister-in-law. As his peculiar method of providing for invalid ladies was pretty notorious, it is not to be wondered at that the Lord Chancellor refused his application;* on which he carried Lady Mar off to Scotland, but was pursued and deprived of his victim by the Lord Chief Justice's warrant, and she was then placed in Lady Mary's care until shortly before her departure from England.

It was the disappointed and vindictive Lord Grange (an excellent authority on such points!) who spread the reports of Lady Mary's ill-treatment of her sister, which Pope coupled with the Rémond affair in the well-known line—

"Who starved a sister or denied a debt."†

There seems to have been no real foundation for these charges; and when in after years Lady Mar temporarily recovered her reason, she wrote to her sister with all the old affection. But Pope was never scrupulous in his choice of weapons, and his quarrel with Lady Mary was then raging. According to Lady Louisa Stuart, her grand-

* He forcibly detained his wife for many years in solitary confinement in the island of St. Kilda.

† In Pope's Notes to the "Dunciad" he says: "This passage was thought to allude to a famous lady who cheated a French wit out of £5000 in the South Sea year."

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mother's "own statement" of its origin was that—

"At some ill-chosen time, when she least expected what romances call a *declaration*, Pope made such passionate love to her, as, in spite of her utmost endeavours to be angry and look grave, provoked an immoderate fit of laughter, from which time he became her implacable enemy."

On this hypothesis, Leigh Hunt, sympathizing with the poet, whom he supposes led on and then ridiculed by a heartless beauty, addressed to Lady Mary's shade an eloquent remonstrance. Her later biographers do not believe the romantic version. They think her parody on Pope's "Rustic Lovers," and her general propensity for sharp sayings, leading to a war of words with nearly all her friends in turn, quite enough to account for a feud which, growing in bitterness with every stinging epigram on either side, joined in by Lord Hervey, Swift, and others, and intensified by fierce political antagonism, was certainly not the least among the causes that impelled her long absence from her native country. They consider Lady Louisa Stuart's story merely "a tradition," and cite in support of their view Pope's assertion that he had no misunderstanding with Lady Mary until he was "the author of his own misfortune in discontinuing her acquaintance;" and her remark to Spence—"You shall

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see what a goddess he makes me in some of his letters, though he makes such a devil of me in his writings afterwards, *without any reason that I know of.*"

But even supposing Pope's addresses to have been so offered and so rejected, one cannot, remembering the highly artificial nature of all his passions, the rapidity and ingenuity with which his apparently most ardent tributes, both in verse and prose, were adapted in turn to each "Cynthia of the minute," and the gall and mire with which he soiled his brilliant pen when Cynthia offended him, think his case deserved the indignant sympathy it has excited. He was a recent acquaintance when Lady Mary went to Turkey, yet he immediately wrote to her what her granddaughter calls "high heroic fustian." *

"The fashion was a French importation," says Mr. Moy Thomas, "which the hostile tariffs of

* One brief specimen of this may be given from Pope's letters to Lady Mary: "I fancy myself in my romantic thoughts and distant admiration of you not unlike the man in the 'Alchemist' that has a passion for the queen of the fairies. I lie dreaming of you in moonshiny nights, exactly in the posture of Endymion gaping for Cynthia in a picture. And with just such a surprise and rapture should I awake, if after your long revolutions were accomplished you should at last come rolling back again, smiling with all that gentleness and serenity peculiar to the moon and you, and gilding the same mountains from which you first set out on your solemn melancholy journey."

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the Whigs were unfortunately unable to prevent. It bore no more resemblance to the genuine love-letters of their day than to those of ours, and the two things were probably never confounded in the mind of either party." In Lady Mary's replies she ignores all Pope's extravagant compliments, adopting a cool tone of intellectual sympathy. And when on her way back to England, she replies to his fervid congratulations on her return—

"I can hardly forbear being angry with you for rejoicing at what displeases me so much . . . 'tis not from insensibility to the joy of seeing my friends . . . but when I consider that I must at the same time see and hear a thousand disagreeable impertinents; that I am a creature that cannot serve anybody but with insignificant good wishes; and that my presence is not a necessary good to any one member of my native country, I think I might much better have stayed where ease and quiet made up the happiness of my indolent life."

The letters all passed through Mr. Wortley's hands, yet he continued Pope's friend after his return from his embassy. And when Pope put some of them into circulation subsequent to the quarrel, he first so manipulated them as to heighten the appearance of sentimental familiarity.

Gay, at all events, wrote of Lady Mary and her intimacy with his brother poet with grace and respect. In his "Welcome to Pope on his

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return from Greece"—the conclusion, that is, of his "Homer"—she is thus introduced:

"What lady's that, to whom he gently bends?
Who knows not her? Ah, those are Wortley's eyes!
How art thou honoured, numbered with her friends!
For she distinguishes the good and wise."

Lady Mary's withdrawal from England has been made the theme of speculations as numerous and diverse as the ground of her quarrel with Pope; yet it seems quite intelligible. The warm exacting affection which Mr. Wortley had repulsed in the early days of marriage had changed into a very real and friendly respect, which could be, and was, as well manifested in absence as in presence. Lady Mary's daughter had married the Earl of Bute,* and formed interests and a circle of her own; her son had hopelessly alienated all his friends by a Fleet marriage with a laundress old enough to be his mother, and nothing was to be looked for from him but fresh scandals; the care of Lady Mar had, by Mr. Wortley's desire, been transferred to her daughter, Lady Frances Erskine; Lady Mary was ill and weary, both in body and mind—there had been sorrows enough in her life to shake the strongest. Travel,

* Groom of the Stole to Frederick Prince of Wales, and afterwards George the Third's favourite Minister.

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which she loved, and a milder climate, had irresistible attractions for her. And she hoped to meet Lady Pomfret, for whom she had a strong affection, and who, since the madness of Lady Mar, had been her most confidential correspondent.

It is certain that this project of residing abroad had been long in contemplation; that at first she tried to prevail on Mr. Wortley to go with her; and that it was on the most amicable terms, and with a promise of his joining her, that they parted in 1739.

"I have taken some pains to put the inclination for travelling into Mr. Wortley's head," she writes to Lady Pomfret. "He proposed following me in six weeks, his business requiring his presence at Newcastle. Since that the change of scene that has happened in England has made his friends persuade him to attend Parliament this session, so that what his inclinations, which must govern mine, will be next spring I cannot absolutely foresee."

At every stage of her journey they corresponded, and Mr. Wortley's appreciation of her letters—in his dry and formal way—is shown by the following passage from one of his replies: "If you mention a few of the great towns you have passed, I shall see the whole journey. I wish (if it be easy) you would be exact and clear in your facts, because I shall lay by carefully what you write of your travels."

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Lady Mary's first long delay was in Venice, where the varied society and the simple manner of life alike charmed her. She found that it was the fashion for the greatest ladies to walk in the admirably paved streets; that the gondolas were delightfully cheap; that a "sixpenny mask, a little cloak, and the head of a domino" formed "the genteel dress to carry you everywhere." Above all—"it is so much the established fashion for everybody to live their own way, that nothing is more ridiculous than censuring the actions of another."

Rome also detained her, and she opened her doors to the English visitors (who were much thrown on their own resources, not being then received by Roman ladies) with such good effect that the Abbé Grant told her she was bound in conscience to pass her life there for the benefit of her countrymen. She saw "bonnie Prince Charlie" and his brother, afterwards Cardinal York, at a public ball.

"They were very richly adorned with jewels. The eldest seems thoughtless enough . . . the youngest is well made, dances finely, and has an ingenuous countenance. . . . The family live very splendidly, yet pay everybody, and (wherever they get it) are certainly in no want of money."

When, in the course of her wanderings, Lady



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Mary arrived at Lyons, she found several letters from Mr. Wortley, in one of which he urged her to see their son, who was again applying for help and promising reform. He expresses the fullest confidence in her judgment, and authorizes her to do and to promise whatever she thinks may be for his good. The impression left by the meeting was not favourable:—

"He is so much altered in his person I should scarcely have known him. He has entirely lost his beauty, and looks at least seven years older than he is, and the wildness that he always had in his eyes is so much increased it is downright shocking, and I am afraid will end fatally. . . . With his head I believe it is possible to make him a monk one day and a Turk three days after. He has a flattering, insinuating manner, which naturally prejudices strangers in his favour. . . . He has a superficial universal knowledge. He really knows most of the modern languages, and, if I can believe him, can read Arabic and has read the Bible in Hebrew."

She fears, however, that no influence, not even self-interest, will permanently reform him, and places no reliance on his promises of good behaviour. The event proved how accurate her judgment was. He showed through life "an absolute incapacity for speaking the truth"—begged, borrowed, and cheated for money wherever he went; sat in Parliament for a time, travelled much, married several times, and, inheriting £1000

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a year from his father, lived abroad entirely.* While in the East he is said to have become first a Roman Catholic and then a Mohammedan. He was a very discreditable convert to either creed.†

While Lady Mary was staying at Avignon in the early part of 1744, she was persuaded to accompany the Duchesse de Crillon to an entertainment given by the Freemasons of Nismes to the Duc de Richelieu. "They almost carried me with them by force," she writes, "which I am tempted to believe an act of Providence, considering my great reluctance, and the service it proved to be to unhappy innocent people." She had only been two hours in the town when some Huguenot

* This became £2000 on the death of his mother, so that Lady Mary was under no moral obligation to leave a son who had always been a terror and disgrace to her more than the "guinea" which Walpole, who knew the circumstances, affected to think such a proof of maternal insensibility.

† Mrs. Montagu says of him: "When I first knew him, a rake and a beau, I did not imagine that he would addict himself at one time to Rabbinical learning, and then travel all over the East, the great itinerant savant of the world. One has read that the believers in the transmigration of souls suppose a man who has been rapacious and cunning does penance in the shape of a fox. Another, cruel and bloody, enters the body of a wolf. But I believe my poor cousin, in his pre-existent state, having broken all moral laws, has been sentenced to suffer in all the various characters of human life. He has run through them all unsuccessfully enough. . . . He has certainly very uncommon parts, but too much of the rapidity of his mother's genius."—"A Lady of the Last Century," p. 131.

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ladies begged her, with tears, to intercede with the Duc de Richelieu on behalf of the Protestant minister and a dozen of his congregation who had been cruelly imprisoned. They said "none of the Catholics would do it, and the Protestants durst not, and God had sent me for their protection. The Duc de Richelieu was too well-bred to refuse to listen to a lady, and I was of a rank and nation to say what I pleased."

Lady Mary had no difficulty in drawing the great man into conversation at the ball, and he told her that he pitied the poor Protestants as much as she did, but his orders from Court were to send them to the galleys. However, to show how much he desired her good opinion, he would solicit their freedom on his return — and he obtained it.

The scenery of Avignon pleased her, but the society did not. "Friendship in France," she says, "is as impossible to be attained as orange-trees on the mountains of Scotland. It is not the product of the climate." And she complains that her home correspondents tell her no news. "I suppose you know everything that passes here," they say; or, "Here is nothing worth troubling you with." She does, however, hear of the death of Pope, and the news evokes no acrimony, only a passing

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wonder "to whom he has left the enjoyment of his pretty house at Twickenham." His will, she says later, "appears more reasonable and less vain than I had expected of him." Lady Mary's letters to her husband reflect, in a calmer strain, the same anxiety for tidings of him, the same regret at his cold reticence with which their married life began. She tells him that her daughter has been long silent, "which gives me the greatest uneasiness; but the most sensible part of it is in regard of your health, which is truly and sincerely the dearest concern I have in this world."

Lady Mary was driven from Avignon by the swarms of Jacobite refugees who entered it in 1746, so that it was "impossible to go into company without hearing a conversation improper to be listened to and dangerous to contradict." But the unsettled state of the Continent made it very difficult to get away, and a certain Count Palazzo, Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Saxony, who brought Lady Mary letters of introduction from her friend the Count of Wackerbarth, persuaded her to travel under his escort as a Venetian lady. It was an adventurous journey, of which she gives a full account to Mr. Wortley.

On leaving Genoa they found the Bocchetta Pass almost blocked by the baggage and the sick

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and wounded of the Spanish army after its defeat at Piacenza. At Serravalle they met a large body of troops, "in the midst of which was Don Philip in person, going a very round trot, looking down, and pale as ashes." The inns were filled with wounded Spaniards, but the Governor granted the "Venetian lady" the shelter of an empty room, without bed or supper. At daybreak the victorious Austrians entered the town, and to them Count Palazzo disclosed Lady Mary's identity, on which they ordered her a guard of hussars, and treated her as a heroine. "This journey has been very expensive," she tells Mr. Wortley, on reaching Brescia; "but I am very glad I have made it. I am now in a neutral country, under the protection of Venice. The Doge is our old friend Grimani, and I do not doubt meeting with all sorts of civility."

Here, however, occurred the third incident in her career of which calumny made capital, and which friendship could not entirely elucidate. On her arrival at Brescia she was met by Count Palazzo's mother, who insisted on taking Lady Mary to her own house, where she was seized with a fever so violent that she says few women of her age (sixty-one) could have recovered from it. When next she wrote to Mr. Wortley she told

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him she had kept her bed for two months, but that Countess Palazzo had taken as much care of her as if she had been a sister, and she could not sufficiently express her gratitude.

On some perverted version of this brief seclusion (she was in a house of her own by the following March) Walpole must have based his scandalous gossip.* But there was some serious quarrel with the Count and Countess Palazzo, for their names never again occur in her letters, and amongst her papers was found a statement in Italian, apparently drawn up for production in a court of law, describing her detention against her will in a country house inhabited by an Italian count and his mother. Lord Wharncliffe conjectures that they endeavoured to extort money from her while invalided under their roof. In any case, the friendship ceased as suddenly as it began.

Later, Lady Mary suffered much from ague, and was sent by her doctors to Lovere, the "most beautifully romantic" place she ever saw, with gardens which reminded her of Richmond Hill. Here she bought an old château and thoroughly identified herself with Italian country life, tending and helping the villagers with so much success

* He told Mann that he had heard of her being "shut up by a lover somewhere in the Brescian."

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that she says she is thought a great physician, and would be thought a saint if she went to mass. She allowed them to act plays in her salon, which they fitted up cleverly as a theatre, and taught them (regardless of their digestions) to make "French rolls, custards, minced pies, and plum-puddings;" and "as good butter as that produced in any part of Great Britain."

No wonder the grateful inhabitants of Lovere desired to erect a statue to their benefactress, ordered the marble, commissioned the sculptor, and were sorely disappointed when she refused to sit to him, fearing that she would be accused in England of erecting her own monument! The only civil excuse she could think of, with which to put off her baffled admirers, was that her religion would not permit her to be made a graven image of.

Lady Mary passed her days amongst her poultry, her bees, her silkworms, her vineyards, and in a wonderful garden, where she made "a dining-room of verdure, capable of holding a table of twenty covers," and "fifteen bowers in different views with seats of turf."* She walked in her wood

* "Gardening is certainly the next amusement to reading," she says. "I am glad to form a taste that will be the amusement of my age now my pen and needle are almost useless to me."

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carpeted with violets and "inhabited by a nation of nightingales and game of all kinds," or descended by easy steps cut in the turf to her river, on which her fisherman rowed her "in a little boat with a green lutestring awning." As a resource for the evenings, her failing sight no longer allowing her to read continuously, she taught some old priests to play whist—for penny points.

Sometimes this tranquil life was broken in upon by parties of thirty ladies and gentlemen who arrived on horseback, with their servants, and expected to be entertained for a fortnight. Or some neighbouring ladies favoured her with a visit in masquerade. "They were all dressed in white like vestal virgins," she tells her daughter, "with garlands in their hands. They came at night with violins and flambeaux, but did not stay more than one dance, pursuing their way to another castle some miles from hence."

Lady Mary hears with great pleasure from Mr. Wortley of their daughter's popularity and social success, "which justifies the opinion I always had of her understanding;" and tells him in return that she has been assured "Lord Bute is still as much in love with his wife as when he married her fifteen years before."

The failing sight of which Lady Mary complained

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when she established her whist class must have improved for a time, as, in thanking Lady Bute for some new books, she says they amused her so much that she gave a very ridiculous proof of her pleasure in them, fitter for her granddaughter than herself. She had returned from a party, and, after riding twenty miles home, partly by moonlight, found the box, opened it, and "falling on Fielding's works, was fool enough to sit up all night reading." But she is no blind admirer of the novelist.

"I wonder," she says, "he does not perceive that Tom Jones and Mr. Booth are both sorry scoundrels. All these sort of books have the same fault, which I cannot easily pardon, being very mischievous. They place a merit in extravagant passions, and encourage young people to hope for impossible events, to draw them out of the misery they chose to plunge themselves into, expecting legacies from unknown relations and generous benefactors to distressed virtue, as much out of nature as fairy treasures."

There are many other lively bits of criticism on which one would like to dwell if space allowed, such as the happy comment on Johnson's *Rambler*: "He always plods in the beaten road of his predecessors, following the *Spectator* (with the same pace a packhorse would a hunter) in the style that is proper to lengthen a paper. . . . I should be glad to know the name of this *laborious*

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author." Richardson she calls "a strange fellow. I heartily despise him and eagerly read him, nay, sob over his works in the most scandalous manner. The two first tomes of 'Clarissa,' touched me, as being very resembling to my maiden days."

Lady Bute appears to have remonstrated with her mother on the frivolity of her tastes, eliciting this reply :—

"Daughter, daughter, don't call names! You are always abusing my pleasures, which is what no mortal will bear. Trash, lumber, sad stuff, are the titles you give to my favourite amusement. . . . We have all our playthings; happy are those that can be contented with those they can obtain. Those hours are spent in the wisest manner that can easiest shade the ills of life, and are the least productive of ill consequences. . . . The active scenes are over at my age. I indulge, with all the art I can, my taste for reading. If I would confine it to valuable books, they are almost as rare as valuable men. As I approach a second childhood I endeavour to enter into its pleasures. Your youngest son is perhaps at this present moment riding on a poker with great delight, not at all regretting that it is not a gold one, and much less wishing it an Arabian horse, which he would not know how to manage. I am reading an idle tale, not expecting wit or truth in it, and am very glad that it is not metaphysics to puzzle my judgment, or history to mislead my opinion. He fortifies his health with exercise, I calm my cares by oblivion. Both methods may appear low to busy people. But if he improves his strength and I forget my infirmities, we both attain very desirable ends."

But we must hasten on, as life and time were hastening on with Lady Mary, not unheeded and

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not wholly unregretted, but noted to her daughter with tranquil composure :—

"There is a quiet after the abandoning of pursuits something like the rest that follows a laborious day. I tell you this for your comfort. It was formerly a terrifying view to mè that I should one day be an old woman. I now find that Nature has provided pleasures for every state. Those only are unhappy who will not be contented with what she gives, but strive to break her laws by affecting a perpetuity of youth, which appears to me as little desirable at present as the babies do to you that were the delight of your infancy."

This was not the serenity of indifference, for she says in another letter that Lady Bute's description of her family gave her "a melancholy joy" :—

"You would have laughed to see the old fool weep over it. I now find that age, when it does not harden the heart and sour the temper, naturally returns to the milky disposition of infancy. . . . You see I am very industrious in finding comfort to myself in my exile, and guarding as long as I can against the peevishness which makes age miserable in itself and contemptible to others."

In the same spirit Lady Mary says :—

"I have often had a mind to write you a consolatory epistle on my own death, which I believe will be some affliction, though my life is wholly useless to you. That part of it which we passed together you have reason to remember with gratitude. . . . Your happiness was my first wish, and the pursuit of all my actions, divested of all self-interest. So far I think you ought, and believe you do, remember me as your real friend."*

* These letters to her daughter sufficiently discredit Walpole when, after calling Lady Bute "one of the best and most sensible

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But another death occurred first, which, by recalling her to England, probably hastened her own; as, when she undertook the long and fatiguing winter journey home, she was suffering from the agonizing and incurable disease which soon after killed her.

Lady Mary had left Lovere for Padua, and Padua for Venice, when she heard of her husband's death in 1761. There can be no doubt of her deep grief; many little phrases in her letters both to Lady Bute and to himself show a lasting affection which it was not at all in her nature to feign. "I am very fond of the jars," she says to Lady Bute, alluding to some china she had asked Mr. Wortley to forward to her, "which I look upon as a present from your father." To him she writes: "I walk in my little garden every morning; I hope you do the same at Bath. May you long continue a blessing to your family and those who know you." And, very touchingly, when speaking of Lady Bute: "I hope her obedience and her affection will make your life agreeable to you. She cannot have more than I

women in the world," who "has never made a false step," he says she was "educated by *such* a mother—or rather, with no education at all." Lady Mary was far too shrewd a woman to have appealed to her daughter's grateful memory if there had been any foundation for the charge of having neglected her.

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have had. I wish the success may be greater." Though Mr. Wortley went abroad twice during his wife's long absence from England, and did not visit her (excuses have been made for this on the ground of his age, and the then great difficulties and inconveniences of travel), she expressed no resentment. When annoyed by the English Resident at Venice she warns Lady Bute: "Do not tell your father these foolish squabbles. It is the only thing I would keep from his knowledge. I am apprehensive he should imagine some misplaced raillery or vivacity of mine has drawn on me these ridiculous persecutions." In reply to what appears to have been the last letter she received from him, she says it touched her more than she is able or willing to express: "I hope your apprehensions of blindness are not confirmed by any fresh symptoms of that terrible misfortune. If I could be of any service to you on that or any other occasion, I shall think my last remains of life well employed." She did employ them, in compliance with her daughter's request, in rejoining her to assist in settling Mr. Wortley's affairs. "I think it my duty," she writes, "to risk my life if I can contribute to the due execution of your honoured father's last will and testament." And a terrible letter to her son concludes thus:—

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"I know not how to write to you, and scarcely what to say. Your present conduct is far more infamous than the past. It is small sign of reform of manners when you durst disturb an indulgent (too indulgent) father's dying pangs. . . . You have shortened your father's days, and will perhaps have the glory to break your mother's heart. I will not curse you. God give you a real, not affected repentance." *

Lady Mary's return to England naturally excited much attention, not all complimentary. Walpole, who had never forgiven her for satirizing his father, Sir Robert, and befriending his detested step-mother, "Moll Skerritt," wrote to Sir Horace Mann :—

"I went last night to visit her. I found her in a little miserable bedchamber of a ready furnished house, with two tallow candles and a bureau covered with pots and pans. On her head, in full of all accounts, she had an old black laced hood wrapped entirely round so as to conceal all hair or want of hair. No handkerchief, but up to her chin a kind of horseman's riding-coat (green I think it had been), brocade, and lined with furs; bodice laced, a foul dimity petticoat sprigged, velvet muffetees on her arms, grey stockings and slippers, her face less changed in twenty years than I could have imagined. I told her so, and she was not so tolerable twenty years ago that she need have taken it for flattery; but she did, and literally gave me a box on the ear. She is very lively, all her senses perfect, her languages as imperfect as ever, her avarice greater. She

* He seems at this time to have given her some fresh and dreadful offence, as a letter found without address among her papers contains these words: "I beg your pardon for this liberty I take. I really feel my head light. I swear to you (so may my soul find peace with God) I know nothing of these infamous libels my son has produced in my name."

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receives all the world and crams them into this kennel. The Duchess of Hamilton, who came in just after me, was so astonished and diverted that she could not speak to her for laughing." *

Two months later he records having met her at Bedford House, "dressed in yellow velvet and sables, with a decent laced head and a black hood, almost like a veil, over her face. She is much more discreet than I expected, and meddles with nothing, but she is woefully tedious in her narrations."

Mrs. Montagu, like Walpole, found Lady Mary looking no older than when she went abroad :—

"She has more than the vivacity of fifteen, and a memory which perhaps is unique. Several people visited her out of curiosity, which she did not like. I visited her because her husband and mine were cousin-germans. Though she has not any foolish partiality for her husband's relations, I was very graciously received, and, you may suppose, entertained by one who neither thinks, speaks, acts, nor dresses like anybody else. Her *domestick* is made up of all nations, and when you get into her drawing-room you imagine you are in the first storey of the Tower of Babel. An Hungarian servant takes your name at the door; he gives it to an Italian, who delivers it to a Frenchman, the Frenchman to a Swiss, and the Swiss to a Pole; so that by the time you get to her ladyship's presence, you have changed your name five times without the expense of an Act of Parliament." †

* "Letters of Horace Walpole," edited by Peter Cunningham. Bentley and Son, 1891. Vol. iii. pp. 479, 480.

† "A Lady of the Last Century," by Dr. Doran, F.S.A. Richard Bentley and Son, 1873. Page 131.

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How indomitable must have been the courage and energy of the woman who could thus visit and receive visitors, entertaining them with vivacity and jesting over the cramped accommodation of her apartments, whilst suffering tortures! For, in six months after her return to England, on the 21st August, 1792, Lady Mary died of cancer.

In October Mrs. Montagu wrote :—

"Lady Mary Wortley Montagu returned to England, as it were to finish where she began. I wish she had given us the account of the events that filled in the space between. She had a terrible distemper; the most virulent cancer I ever heard of, which carried her off very soon. I met her at Lady Bute's, in June, and she then looked well. In three weeks, at my return to London, I heard she was given over. The hemlock kept her drowsy and free from pain, and the physicians thought if it had been given early might possibly have saved her."

If one looks in Lady Mary's letters for scandal and coarseness, for occasional flippancy and an affectation of cynicism, these blemishes are easily discovered: they were faults of her time, training, and circumstances.

The breadth of view, freedom from prejudice, and intelligent observation also to be found there, the touches of serious thought and tenderness which slip out, as it were, almost against the writer's will, may fairly be credited to herself.



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The extracts from the letters given here have been chosen rather to illustrate her disposition than her intellect. Her character is still somewhat severely judged, but no one calls her wit in question now.

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# MRS. DELANY: "QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S FRIEND."

AMONG the saucy young beauties of Hampton Court there is a handsome old face under a close cap and black silk hood, which in its expression of venerable placidity looks somewhat out of keeping with such surroundings, and may excite curiosity that the simple inscription "Mrs. Delany" does little to satisfy.*

Mrs. Delany was not a great authoress, nor an enterprising traveller, nor a brilliant leader of fashion. She was essentially an Englishwoman of the best old type—sensible, kindly, well-bred, and well-informed. But her experiences were varied, and her friends were so numerous and distinguished that her story is more interesting

* Painted when she was eighty-two. Horace Walpole says of it: "There is a new genius, one Opie, a Cornish lad of nineteen, who has taught himself to colour in a strong, bold, masterly style. . . . He has done a head of Mrs. Delany for the King—*oui, vraiment*, it is pronounced like Rembrandt; but, as I told her, it does not look older than she is, but older than she does."—"Walpole's Letters," vol. viii. p. 156.

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than the lives of most good women are wickedly supposed to be.

In these days, when a valuable book is no sooner published than another elbows it on one side, readers with time and patience to master the six thick volumes containing Mrs. Delany's autobiography and letters are probably rare. But they would well reward inspection, for they afford a lively and faithful picture of the society of her time, as well as an interesting portrait of the writer—"a private individual," as the editor, Lady Llanover, says, "whose name has been hallowed and remembered for more than a hundred years."

Mary Granville, a great-granddaughter of the gallant loyalist Sir Bevil Granville, was born in 1700, at Coulston in Wiltshire. When she was eight years old, her father and the rest of his family having settled at "Little Chelsea,"* Mary was taken to Whitehall to live with her Aunt Anne, formerly Maid of Honour to Mary II., who on the Queen's death married Sir John Stanley. The little girl had already a great capacity for making friends, and from a large family of cousins, grand-children of Henry Earl of Rochester (son of the great Chancellor Hyde), who lived in "the fine Gothic gate which divided Whitehall, com-

* Now West Brompton.

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monly called the Cockpit, from King Street," she singled one for special affection. This was Catherine Hyde—Prior's "Kitty, beautiful and young"—afterwards Duchess of Queensbury, whose wit, beauty, and eccentricity made her, as her cousin records, "from her early years to the end of a long life a general object of animadversion, censure, and admiration."

Handel, newly arrived in London and busy on "Rinaldo," came to Whitehall when Mary was ten years old, to pay his respects to Sir John Stanley.

"We had no better instrument," says Sir John's niece, 'than a little spinnet of mine, on which the great musician performed wonders. . . . The moment he was gone I seated myself at the spinnet and played the best lesson I had then learnt. My uncle archly asked me whether I thought I should ever play as well as Mr. Handel? 'If I did not think I should,' cried I, 'I would burn my instrument!'"

Five years later George Lord Lansdown, another uncle, was sent to the Tower with Lord Oxford, for participation in one of the many Jacobite plots; and Colonel Granville, deeming it prudent to retire to the country, summoned his elder daughter to join him. Mary was then fifteen—handsome, lively, accomplished, and of an impetuous temper. She had been brought up in the expectation of being a Maid of Honour,

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according to a promise made by Queen Anne; had heard one opera, and seen one play, and on being torn from the delights of town and plunged into the wilds of Gloucestershire in November, during "as severe a frost as was ever known in England," bewailed her fate, quoting Pope's verses to Martha Blount—

"Thus from the world fair Zephalinda flew,
Saw others happy, and with sighs withdrew. . . .
She went to plain work, and to purling brooks,
Old-fashioned halls, dull aunts, and croaking rooks.
To part her time 'twixt reading and bohea—
To muse, and spill her solitary tea.

* * * * *

Some squire, perhaps, you take delight to rack,
Whose game is whisk, whose treat a toast in sack. . . .
Whose laughs are hearty, though his jests are coarse—
And loves you best of all things—but his horse!"

which were fairly descriptive of her own approaching employments, and curiously prophetic of her then undreamt-of and unwelcome suitor.

When spring came round, Buckland proved a much more endurable abode. Colonel Granville's residence was a low, roomy house—

"the outside entirely covered with laurel, the inside neat, furnished with homespun stuff, adorned with china and prints. The front faces the finest vale in England, the vale of Evesham. . . . The back is shaded by a very fine hill, which rises gradually; between lies the small garden, well stocked with fruit and flowers. Nothing could be more

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fragrant and rural; the sheep and cows came bleating and lowing to the pales of the garden. On the left hand was a rookery; on the right a little clear brook ran winding through a copse of young elms (the resort of many warbling birds) and fell with a cascade into the garden."*

Here Mary found a friend in Sarah Kirkham, afterwards mother-in-law of the once celebrated Mrs. Chapone; and a lover, whom she calls "Roberto," supposed to have been a Mr. Twyford, who, being provided with nineteen brothers and sisters, and a stony-hearted stepmother unfavourable to his settlement in life, could not bring his love affair to a happy conclusion.

In the autumn of 1817 Lord and Lady Lansdown, released from the Tower, invited their niece to join them at their country seat, Longleat, which was filled with visitors who danced every night to an excellent band, Lord Lansdown being "magnificent in his nature" and princely in his hospitality.

Amongst the guests was Mr. Alexander Pendarves of Roscrow, Cornwall, a squire of sixty years. When he arrived the family were at dinner. He sent in his name, and Lord Lansdown, "overjoyed at his arrival," insisted on his joining them at once. The fair critic of seventeen wit-

* "Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Delany" (Bentley, 1861), vol. i. p. 18.

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nessing this warm welcome, expected, she says, to see—

"somebody with the appearance of a gentleman; and when the poor old, dripping, almost drowned man was brought into the room, like Hob out of the well, his wig, his coat, his dirty boots, his large unwieldy person, and his crimson countenance, were all subjects of great mirth to me."

But the laughter soon turned to weeping. Mr. Pendarves put off his departure from Longleat from day to day, and soon showed who was its chief attraction; and Lord Lansdown, rejoiced at an opportunity of strengthening his interests in Cornwall, made "a very pathetic speech of his love and care" to his unhappy niece, and, pleading her father's altered circumstances and the duty and gratitude she owed to all her family, obtained her reluctant acceptance of a man she feared and hated. Her parents were at once sent for, and a very grand wedding was arranged without loss of time.

"Never was woe drest out in gayer colours," she says, "and when I was led to the altar, I wished from my soul I had been led, as Iphigenia was, to be sacrificed. I *was* sacrificed. I lost, not life indeed, but all that makes life desirable."

During the very bitter honeymoon spent at Longleat, a gentleman called who mentioned that the unfortunate "Roberto" had been "struck with

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a dead palsy." His mother's cruel treatment and his despair at losing Mary Granville had brought on his illness, and although he never uttered more than a word or two again he wrote perpetually and Mary was "the only subject of his pen." After his death, which occurred in about a year, a piece of the "cut paper," for which Mary was famous, was found under his pillow.

The home to which Mr. Pendarves carried his reluctant bride was a castellated mansion near Falmouth, guarded by high walls that hid it from view—uninhabited for thirty years, and with rotting floors, falling ceilings, and windows high above all possibility of looking through them.

When one remembers that the master of this elysium, in addition to age, ugliness, and the gout, for which it would perhaps be unfair to hold him responsible, was addicted to jealousy, snuff-taking, and heavy drinking, with intervals of sullen, ill-tempered sobriety, it is truly wonderful that Lord Lansdown should have been hypocrite enough to write thus to his niece :

"I find by the account you give me of your neighbours and their contentions that *c'est tout comme ici*, and that the world is everywhere in a quarrel some way. But as long as we enjoy peace within doors, and domestic friendship and affection is uninterrupted, the rest is of very little concern, and *you* may survey from your ascent at Roscrow with

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pleasure all the storms below you. I hope to hear in your next that my friend Pen is restored to the use of his limbs."

In spite of Mr. Pendarves's jealousy—which made his wife say, "I would rather have had a lion walk into the house than any one whose person and address could alarm him"—and of an income crippled by dishonest servants and poor relations, he sometimes took Mary to town, and sometimes to Windsor, and wherever she went her youth, beauty, and liveliness attracted admirers. One of the most persistent of these was M. Fabrici, the Hanoverian Minister, who, one summer evening, meeting her alone in the Little Park, held her by the skirt whilst he poured out a profusion of compliments.

"I was so provoked," she says, "that I assured him if he did not instantly go away I would go up to the windows of the apartment where I knew the King sat after dinner, and make my complaint of him aloud. . . . The conversation lasted above an hour, and what added to my distress was that the walk we were in faced the chamber window where Gromio * always sat. What a scene would it have been for him to have seen M. Fabrici on his knees, holding me by the petticoat!"

Mrs. Pendarves's difficulties were increased by the worse than folly of her aunt, Lady Lansdown, who tried to draw her into the intrigues which had brought discredit on herself. The worldly and

* Mr. Pendarves, fastened to his chair by gout.

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frivolous aunt, the dissipated lover, Lord Clare, and the respectful and romantic lover, Lord Baltimore, described by Mrs. Pendarves, might have stepped out of one of Richardson's novels. And the mixture of prudence and high spirit in Mrs. Pendarves herself would have done credit to his most faultless heroines.

Seven years after their ill-assorted marriage Mr. and Mrs. Pendarves both left home; he, she says, "*to his usual set*," she to Lady Sunderland, her friend from childhood. A presentiment of evil made her return earlier than usual, but her husband had reached home before her. He said many kind things to her, "wished he might live to reward her," and told her to "ring the bell that he might sign his will." This, however, she persuaded him to defer until next day, thinking him too depressed for such a task. "He slept very uneasily," she says, in the narrative of her early life written for her dear friend Margaret Cavendish Harley, afterwards Duchess of Portland:

"I did not close my eyes till past four, and then slept till seven. I rang my bell, my servant came and opened the shutter. I stepped softly, for fear of awaking Gromio, and as I put by the curtain and got up, how terrified was I when I saw him quite black in the face! At first I thought him in a fit, but immediately it struck me *he was dead!*"

Mrs. Pendarves, who had lost her father in 1723,

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and whose mother and young sister were staying at Gloucester, where they afterwards settled, at once took up her abode with her aunt, Lady Stanley. Her husband's will not having been signed, the fortune on which Lord Lansdown had counted when he compelled her to marry "Gromio" was reduced to a slender jointure. But she was absolutely indifferent to money, saw the Cornish estates pass to her husband's niece without regret, and after the first shock of Mr. Pendarves's death, appears to have led a very happy life, not much disturbed even by the strange conduct of Lord Baltimore, whose attentions seem to have gratified her, but who after telling her one night at the opera that he had loved her for five years, quarrelled with her next morning on a point of sentiment, and straightway married the daughter of Sir Theodore Janssen, who had a large fortune.*

Other admirers, including Lord Tyrconnel,†

* Lady Llanover thinks that Lord Baltimore loved Mrs. Pendarves "as much as he could love anything but himself," but that "his extravagant habits required a richer wife." A certain amount of flightiness seems, however, generally to have been attributed to him. George II. said, "My Lord Baltimore thinks he understands everything and understands nothing, . . . and, *entre nous*, is a little mad." And Horace Walpole credited him only with "a good deal of jumbled knowledge." His sudden meeting with Mrs. Pendarves at a Drawing-room after the report of his being lost at sea, is like an episode from an old romance.

† "To let you see seriously that money without worth cannot tempt me, I have refused my Lord Tyrconnel. Lady Carteret

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appeared on the scene, but were coldly dismissed. Besides these sentimental episodes, Mrs. Pendarves, in her letters to her sister, discusses and describes masquerades, balls, water parties, Handel's music, the "Beggars' Opera," "Mr. Voltaire's works," the Lord Mayor's Feast, and the Coronation of George II. At the Royal Banquet in Westminster Hall she says :—

"The room was finely illuminated, and though there were 1800 candles, besides what were on the tables, they were all lighted in less than three minutes by an invention of Mr. Heidegger's, which succeeded to the admiration of all spectators. The branches that held the candles were all gilt and in the form of pyramids. I leave it to your lively imagination, after this, to have a notion of the splendour of the place. . . . It was not disagreeable to be taken notice of by one's acquaintance when they appeared to so much advantage, for everybody I knew came under the place where I sat, to offer me meat and drink, which was drawn up from below into the galleries by baskets at the end of a long string, which they filled with cold meat and bread, sweetmeats and wine."

Ann Granville, in her country seclusion, was evidently amused and inquisitive about her sister's town admirers, and in one letter Mrs. Pendarves says :—

asked me the other day if I would give her leave to proceed in it, that she thought I should be very blameworthy to refuse so vast a fortune, a title, and a good-natured man. All that, I told her, was no temptation to me. He had the character very justly of being *silly*, and I would not tie myself to such a companion for an empire."

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"You may take all my lovers amongst you and try what you can make out of them. Let me see, there's first Don Diego, solemn and stately, and, if you will take his own word, well read in all arts and sciences. 'Passive obedience and non-resistance' is his text, and the doctrine that he will teach with a vengeance. The next is a deserter. He can be of no use; he was a pretty plaything enough—could sing and dance; but as he has 'listed under another banner, I strike him out of *my* list. Now as to those others laid to my charge, I declare myself not guilty. The first in quality is an Adonis in person, but his mind, alas! how idle, how vain! . . . An alderman, a councillor, and two or three more such odd animals, I will send down in a bag together, and you may cast lots for them—they are not worth my wearing."

The mirth and humour of these charming letters is often varied by a touch of simple tenderness.

"Nothing can be more beautiful than this garden is at present," Mrs. Pendarves writes to her sister from Northend in May, 1730; "and what endears it more to me is the remembrance of having walked over it with you. Every tree you liked is a favourite, particularly the oranges. Had you taken a fancy to the nettles I verily believe I should have preferred them to jessamine."

Mrs. Pendarves anticipated Leigh Hunt in his favourite precept, "Cultivate cheerfulness." "Let no opportunity of laughter escape you, I beg," she says to her sister. "Every hearty laugh you laugh is an addition to my happiness; so laugh, and *be sure to let me know you do.*"

The next sighing swain we see at the feet of

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the fair "Aspasia," as she signed herself in her letters to the Duchess of Portland, is perhaps the last whom we should expect to see in such a position—no other than John Wesley!* He was a friend of the Kirkhams, who introduced him to Mrs. Pendarves, and a correspondence ensued, extending over four years, in which Mrs. Granville and her daughter Ann (under the name of "Selina") were included. Lady Llanover gives only one of these letters, very serious and slightly formal, but Mr. Tyerman's "Life of Wesley" contains several others much more tender in tone, from which a few passages may be quoted. Wesley, who signs himself "Cyrus," writes:

"Every line of your last shows the heart of the writer, where, with friendship, dwells humility. Ours, dear Aspasia, it is to make acknowledgment, upon us lie the obligations of gratitude. If it be a fault to have too harmonious a soul, too exquisite a sense of elegant, generous transports, then, indeed, I must own there is an obvious fault both in Selina and Aspasia."

A little later:

"Should one who was as my own soul, be torn from me, it would be best for me. Surely, if you were called first, mine eyes ought not to overflow because all tears were wiped away from yours! But I much doubt whether self-love would not be found too strong for a friendship which

* Then a Fellow of Lincoln College, and leader of the "Oxford Methodists."

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I even now find to be less disinterested than I hitherto imagined. . . . Tell me, Aspasia—tell me, Selina—if it be a fault that my heart burns within me, when I reflect on the many marks of regard you have already shown."

Then Aspasia asks if she may go to "a concert of music" on Sunday evenings, and Cyrus replies somewhat diplomatically:

"Far be it from me to think that any circumstance of life shall ever give the enemy an advantage over Aspasia. . . . To judge whether any action be lawful on the Sabbath or no, we are to consider whether it advances the end for which the Sabbath was ordained. Whatever, therefore, tends to this end, is lawful on this day. Whatever does not tend to advance this end is not lawful on this day."

In another letter he tells her that he has been accused of being

"*too strict*, carrying things too far in religion, and laying burdens on myself, if not on others, which are neither necessary nor possible to be borne."

By return of post, Aspasia replies:

"The imputation thrown upon you is a most extraordinary one. But such is the temper of the world—when you have no vice to feed their spleen with, they will condemn the highest virtue. O Cyrus, how noble a defence you make! and how are you adorned with the beauty of holiness! How ardently do I wish to be as resigned and humble as yourself!"*

When some of these letters were written Mrs. Pendarves was a frequent guest at the house of

* Tyerman's "Life and Times of Wesley" (Hodder & Stoughton, 1870), vol. i. p. 78.

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John Wesley's relation, Richard Colley, who assumed the name of Wesley on succeeding to the Meath estates of his cousin, Garrett Wesley, and was afterwards created Baron Mornington. For him Hogarth was then painting a family group, and Mrs. Pendarves writes to her sister—

"I am grown passionately fond of Hogarth's painting; there is *more sense* in it than any I have seen. . . . He has promised to give me some instructions about drawing that will be of great use—some rules of his own that he says will improve me more in a day than a year's learning in the common way."

Mrs. Pendarves was then contemplating a visit to Ireland, and the correspondence with John Wesley languished. "I am indebted to Cyrus," she rather coldly tells "Selina," "but I will write as soon as I can. You may say I am in some hurry preparing for my intended journey," which effectually distracted her thoughts.

And if she had not taken this journey—would Cyrus and Aspasia ever have been united? Mr. Tyerman evidently considers that his hero had a narrow escape from the fair worldling, and that her influence would have gone far to extinguish the shining light of Methodism. But the danger was probably never very great. Wesley was always (with due apologies to "the Connexion" be it spoken) fond of what was then called



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"philandering," and given to cooling down when a matrimonial crisis seemed imminent; and "Aspasia," though she was sincerely interested by his undoubted goodness and talent, and his already distinguished position as head of the great evangelical revival, was never likely to have adopted even a modification of his ascetic views. Before long she wrote to her sister—

"Cyrus, by this time, has blotted me out of his memory, or, if he does remember me, it can only be to reproach me. What can I say for myself, in having neglected so extraordinary a correspondent? I only am the sufferer, but I should be very sorry to have him think my silence proceeded from negligence. I declare it is want of time."

In Dublin Mrs. Pendarves and her travelling companions were the guests of the Bishop of Killala and Mrs. Clayton. "A universal cheerfulness reigns in the house," she tells her sister. "They keep a very handsome table, six dishes of meat are constantly at dinner, and six at supper."

In the much more formal narrative written to "Maria" (Duchess of Portland), Aspasia gives her first impressions of Dr. Delany:

"The character he bore in the world, and his particular attachment to my relations and friends," the Earl and Countess Granville, "made me wish to be acquainted with him. He lived in a very agreeable manner, reserving one day in the week for his particular friends, amongst which

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number were those of the best learning and genius in the kingdom. I thought myself honoured by being admitted into such a set. . . . His wit and learning were to me his meanest praise; the excellence of his heart, his humanity, benevolence, charity and generosity, his tenderness, affection, and friendly zeal, gave me a higher opinion of him than of any other man I had ever conversed with."

Dublin society, in 1731, was very brilliant, and Mrs. Pendarves "fluttered" at all the vice-regal entertainments, besides assiduously cultivating the friendship of the wits and scholars, and her portraits of the noticeable people she met, from the gravest divine to the youngest belle (Mrs. Pendarves always had a generous appreciation of pretty faces), are as vivid as Fanny Burney's, and more unstudied. She could be satirical, too, on occasion: witness this description of a clumsy partner—a serious matter in those days, when the partnership was for the evening, not merely for the dance:

"Captain Folliat, a man six foot odd inches high, black, awkward, ramping, roaring, etc. I thought he would have shook my arms off, and crushed my toes to atoms; every moment he did some blundering thing, and as often asked 'my ladyship's pardon.' I was pitied by the whole company. At last I was resolved to *dispatch him with dancing*, since he was not worth my conquest any other way. I called a council about it, having some scruples of conscience, and fearing he might appear and haunt me after his death. But, when it was made plain to me that I should do the world a great service by dispatching him, I had no more qualms

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about it. In the midst of his furious dancing, when he was throwing his arms about most outrageously (just like a card scaramouch on a stick), snap went something that we all thought had been the main bone of his leg, but it proved only a bone of his toe. Notwithstanding which, like '*Widdington*,' he fought upon his stumps, and would not spare me one dance; we began pegging it at eight, and continued till one, *without ceasing*."

During this visit to Ireland, Mrs. Pendarves became acquainted with Swift.

"The day before we came out of town," she writes from Dangan, "we dined at Dr. Delany's," recently married to his first wife, a rich widow, "and met the usual company. The Dean of St. Patrick's was there, *in very good humour*. He calls himself *my master*, and corrects me when I speak bad English, or do not pronounce my words distinctly. I wish he lived in England, I should not only have a great deal of entertainment from him, but improvement."

When Mrs. Pendarves returned to England they became correspondents, and interesting letters on both sides have been preserved. She was intimate with Swift's friend, Lord Bathurst, and her uncle, Lord Lansdown, charged her with cordial messages. "He laments the days that are past," she tells Swift, "and constantly drinks your health in champagne, as clear as your thoughts and sparkling as your wit."

Swift writes to her in the half-bantering, half-melancholy tone, so often heard in his "Journal to Stella."

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"Pray, madam," says one letter, "preserve your eyes, how dangerous soever they may be to us; and yet you ought in mercy to put them out, because they direct your hand in writing, which is equally dangerous. Well, madam, pray God bless you wherever you go or reside! May you be ever as you are, agreeable to every Killala curate or Dublin Dean, for I disdain to mention temporal folks *without* gowns and cassocks. I will wish for your happiness, although I shall *never see you*, as Horace did for Galatea when she was going a long voyage from home. Pray read the verses in the original. A year or two ago I would have put the whole into English verse, and applied it to you, but my rhyming is fled with my health, and, what is more to be pitied, even my vein of satire upon ladies is lost."

At this time Mrs. Pendarves's life was very gay and full of interest. She was present at the Drawing-room held after the marriage of the Princess Royal (when, according to Lord Hervey, the wretched bride concealed her horror of "that Æsop," the Prince of Orange, with so much dignity and self-command); Handel played, and Strada sang at her little musical afternoons; no assembly was complete without her. Yet still she writes to her sister:

"Can't you persuade Mr. Donna to build a room for us next year? I have not spent a summer in the country with you since we were at Ealing, and don't you remember how sweet that was? I am sure you do! The churchyard and the fields, even the dusty lanes, all were charming. You and the summer, and the country together, are the greatest blessings this world affords me."

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With all her gaiety of heart, and love of every harmless amusement, Mrs. Pendarves found plenty of time and inclination for study. She became a proficient in painting,* was fond of botany, and in June, 1734, she writes:

"I have got a new madness; I am running wild after shells. This morning I have set my little collection of shells in nice order in my cabinet, and they look so beautiful that I must, by some means, enlarge my stock. The beauties of shells are as infinite as of flowers, and to consider how they are inhabited enlarges a field of wonder that leads one insensibly to the great Director and Author of these wonders."

Her friend, the Duchess of Portland, who ardently sympathized with all her tastes, was then making a collection of *land shells*, and records triumphantly in a letter of this period, "I have killed a thousand snails!"

Once there is an amusing touch of human weakness in Mrs. Pendarves's letters. She certainly liked Lord Baltimore more than any of her suitors, though she was afraid to accept him, and, describing a ball given by the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1740, she says: "His lady looked

* Lady Llanover says that Mrs. Delany's pictures, in crayons and oils, numbered seventy-five. Judging from those engraved in her "Life and Correspondence," the portraits of her friends must have been admirable. She also drew all the patterns for the immense quantity and variety of artistic needlework with which she furnished her own and her relations' houses.

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like a *frightened owl*, her locks strutted out and most furiously greased, or rather gummed and powdered." *

In the same year her passionately loved sister Ann married Mr. Dewes, a country gentleman of good family and fortune, after about six months' acquaintance, made with a most business-like view to marriage, and without consulting Mrs. Pendarves. Naturally she regarded the match with some coolness and mistrust at first; but Mr. Dewes's very high character seems to have won the regard of all his new relations, though the outspoken comment of one of them on hearing of the marriage was: "Lord, have mercy upon me, she was very sly to carry it off so!"

In April, 1743, Mrs. Pendarves received another offer, and many of her friends and relations were

* The court dresses of the time were so extraordinary that we cannot resist quoting another of Mrs. Pendarves's lively descriptions: "Lady Scarborough was in violet satin, the petticoat embroidered with clumsy festoons of *nothing-at-alls*, supported by pillars no better than posts. . . . The Duchess of Queensbury's clothes pleased me best. They were white satin embroidered, the bottom of the petticoat *brown hills* covered with all sorts of weeds, and every breadth had an old stump of a tree, that ran almost to the top, broken and ragged, round which twined nasturtiums, ivy, honeysuckle, periwinkles, convolvuluses, and vines with variegated leaves. The robings and facings were little green banks with all sorts of weeds, and the sleeves and the rest of the gown loose twining branches finished with gold." We commend this design to the School of Art Needlework at South Kensington.

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inclined to think that, like the girl in the fairy tale, she took the crooked stick at last. For Patrick Delany, Chancellor of St. Patrick's, was a widower, in his fifty-ninth year, of moderate fortune and obscure birth. But he had some repute as a theologian,* a spotless character, tastes very similar to Mrs. Pendarves's own, and great popularity in the cultured circles in which she was such a favourite. Like her sister, she promptly made up her mind when the right suitor appeared, and was married very quietly in June, afterwards visiting her mother at Gloucester, her sister Mrs. Dewes, her beloved Duchess of Portland, and other friends, some of whom frowned on the bride and bridegroom. Her brother Bernard Granville never became thoroughly cordial to Dr. Delany; and "the old Countess," she writes, "looked so cross and so cold that I stayed but one quarter of an hour, and she received D. D. in the same way."

There is every indication that they were a very happy and sympathetic couple; but one cannot avoid a dark suspicion that "D. D." was sometimes rather formal and rather heavy, and, as the letters

* Dr. Johnson praised his "Revelation examined with Candour," and Mrs. Montagu wrote in Johnsonian phrase—"In Dr. Delany's imagination I could perceive the *poet*, in his reflections the *philosopher*, and in both the *divine*."

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proceed, a moralizing and didactic tone occasionally qualifies their natural vivacity, which would seem to have been caught from Mrs. Delany's "worthy, sensible friend." She was much on the alert when bishoprics were vacant, but in 1744 the Duke of Devonshire offered her husband the Deanery of Down, which they agreed in thinking "a better thing than any small bishopric," and in June they sailed from Chester for Ireland to take possession.

Mrs. Delany was delighted with Delville, her husband's miniature estate, which had been greatly improved since she saw it in former years; the picturesque gardens, with their fine view of Dublin harbour, especially charmed her, and she forthwith planned an orangery, a grotto for her favourite shells, and other additions to their beauty.

She was amusingly indignant when her pretty grounds were not appreciated. "Lady Bell Monck walked in the garden," she writes, "and had no eyes nor understanding to see that it was not *a common vulgar garden;* and she did not commend anything she saw—all the pearls were thrown away!" The Viceroy and Lady Chesterfield were more discerning. They breakfasted at Delville, went all over the house and grounds, and "could

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not have said more civil things had it been my Lord Cobham's Stowe!"

At Delville Mrs. Delany began a life entirely after her own heart. Together she and the Dean relieved their poor neighbours and entertained their rich ones, with equal charity and hospitality. They generally had visitors staying in their house, often inviting the less affluent who could not otherwise have enjoyed so pleasant a change. They had a resident harper, and gave children's balls, at which Mrs. Delany herself danced all the evening; and in cold weather they kept themselves warm with "French fox," or "Puss in the corner." They worked vigorously in the gardens, and trudged all over the neighbourhood by day, and in the evenings the Dean read aloud, while his wife was busy with the exquisite needlework, some specimens of which are still to be seen at Windsor Castle.* They visited Dublin when Garrick, Sheridan (father of Richard Brinsley), or

* Mrs. Delany's own taste in reading was almost omnivorous, and is fairly indicated in a note in which she asks for the return of some books she has lent her cousins, notably "Homer's Iliad" and the "Belle Assemblée." She was an enthusiast for Shakespeare, and for Richardson, who corresponded with her and Mrs. Dewes. She was a tardy but genuine convert to the charms of Madame de Sévigné, and read, though without much admiration, the works of Voltaire and Rousseau, and with stronger, though not unmixed sympathy, those of William Law and Dr. Romaine.

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Barry acted there, or when any good music was to be heard, especially if it were composed by Mrs. Delany's adored Handel. And how time was found for her huge correspondence is marvellous.

The Dean evidently had an excellent heart. His wife's letters are full of his goodness to old and struggling friends, and after speaking of two weddings in the family, at one of which he was to give the bride a portion and trousseau, and a farm to the bridegroom at the other, she says: "When this is done he has not a relation left that he has not settled in some comfortable way." He also set an example to the clergy of his day by visiting all the families in his Deanery, where the poor had been so neglected that they told him they had, until his time, "never seen a clergyman in their lives but when they went to church."

In August, 1747, Mrs. Delany's mother died, suddenly, whilst on her knees praying—strangely and literally fulfilling her often-expressed wish. She was buried in the precincts of Gloucester Cathedral. The Dean and his wife made a pilgrimage to her tomb, and on their return to Ireland Mrs. Delany writes to her sister from Mount Panther, a small house which the Dean occupied when visiting Dowh:

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"Peeped into the garden—excellent gooseberries, potatoes, currants, and all garden stuff; fine lobster, salmon, trout, crabs, every day at the door. Monday evening went to Dundrum, a mile off, a pleasant nest of cabins by the seaside, where may be had kitchen chairs, French white wine at fivepence a bottle, vinegar, Hungary water and capers, *mugs* and *pigs*, of which we bought some."

But even in those comparatively primitive scenes and days Mrs. Delany bewailed the rapid disappearance of rustic simplicity. *Wine* and *tea*, she said, had usurped the place of syllabub, and the dairymaids wore "large hoops and velvet hoods!"

If genuine simplicity had departed, there were still some funny imitations of it.

"The grand ball" in Dublin "was given on Wednesday," she writes in 1752, "to the great contentment of the best company of both sexes. The men were gallant, the ladies were courteous! The musicians and singers were dressed like Arcadian shepherdesses and shepherds, and placed among the rocks. If tea, coffee, or chocolate were wanting, you held your cup to a leaf of a tree and it was filled! and whatever you wanted to eat or drink was found on a rock, or on a branch, or in the hollow of a tree."

In the same year a cloud gathered over Delville in the shape of a long and harassing lawsuit, brought by the Tennisons, the family of the first Mrs. Delany, which lingered on for nearly six years.

When the lawsuit was first threatened Mrs.

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Delany made some very characteristic comments to her sister:

"When I married D. D. I had no view but that of securing a tender friend and a most valuable companion, and the frowns of fortune cannot rob me of these advantages; and for 'the trash of the world' I *hope* I can resign it without repining should that be our case. . . . To say I am not at times dejected and oppressed would not be credited by you, who have known my heart so many years. You know that I am quick, easily alarmed, deeply affected by the common accidents of life, and that though I do *not* love money for its own sake, *I love to spend it!* That, above all, I have *I fear* too great a regard to fame, and that an apparent blemish on my own or my friend's character is a point of infinite consequence to me. And as this unexpected turn in our affairs has struck at both fortune and fame, it is impossible for me not to feel the blow."

The suit was at last concluded by an appeal to the House of Lords, where Lord Mansfield, "after an hour and a half's speaking with angelic oratory, pronounced the decree in our favour." Dr. Delany was to pay £3000 and some other comparatively trifling sums — but "the Dean's character is cleared," writes his wife, joyously, "and set in the fair light it deserves"—and she cares for nothing else.

The appeal had of course involved a long residence in London, and the period of suspense was cheered by intercourse with Mrs. Delany's innumerable friends and connections, amongst them one of the lovely Gunnings.

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"Yesterday after chapel the Duchess brought home Lady Coventry to feast me, and *a feast she was!* She is a fine figure and vastly handsome, notwithstanding a silly look sometimes about her mouth; she has a thousand airs, but with a sort of innocence that diverts one. Her dress was a black silk sack, made for a large hoop, which she wore without any, and it trailed on the ground; a pink satin long cloak, lined with ermine, mixed with squirrel skins. On her head a French cap that just covered the top, of blonde, in the form of a butterfly with its wings not quite extended, frilled lappets crossed under her chin and tied with pink and green ribbon—a head-dress that would have charmed a *shepherd!* She has a thousand dimples and prettinesses in her cheeks, her eyes a little drooping at the corners, but fine for all that."

And here is a companion picture of another famous beauty:

"I was making tea in the cabinet last Wednesday when who should glide in but the Duchess of Queensbury, in a mob and white hood pinned close under her chin, a yellow mohair gown, no ruffles, only little frills, no hoop, a tumbled apron, and her capuchin dangling round her arm; yet there was a grace in her altogether that shone out in spite of her dress. I believe she was a little surprised at finding my rooms so full; she stopped in the outer room, and said, not seeing me there, and the rooms so fine, 'I am afraid I have mistaken the *house*;' upon which my brother, who was at cards, got up and introduced her into the cabinet."

One good result of the lawsuit was that it brought Dr. Delany and his wife into more friendly relations with her brother Bernard Granville, who became, she says, "very good and kind" to them, and after judgment was given in

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the House of Lords, they visited him at Calwich.

Great was their delight on returning to Delville, no longer haunted by the dread of losing it. All their varied collection of pets welcomed them; wild birds again accompanied them on their strolls round the garden and ate from the Dean's hand; and they busied themselves in completing the little chapel, on which Mrs. Delany lavished all her decorative art.

Their next visit to England, in 1760, was saddened by the severe illness of Mrs. Dewes, and by rapidly increasing signs of age in Dr. Delany. The latter was ordered to try the Bath waters, and early in the following year he accompanied Mrs. Delany to Bristol to meet Mr. and Mrs. Dewes. A few anxious months they spent together, and in July Mrs. Dewes very calmly and peacefully passed away. This was a crushing blow to Mrs. Delany, who for half a century had sought sympathy in every joy and sorrow, every amusement and study, every hope or disappointment, in "the sister of her heart."

Mrs. Delany's letters to Mrs. Dewes can in their shrewd yet gentle humour, and their evident bending of every faculty to gratify the beloved correspondent, be compared only to those of

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Madame de Sévigné; inferior in wit, of course, but equal in tenderness. One of her greatest consolations on returning to Ireland was her correspondence with Mary Dewes, who seems to have greatly resembled her mother in disposition. In 1763 Mrs. Delany was again in London to chaperon this charming niece during her first season. Miss Dewes was a great favourite with her relative and godmother the Countess Cowper, whom she often visited at Richmond. After parting with Mary Dewes in June, Lady Cowper writes:

"I hope we shall meet again in August. 'And *is not that an age?*' as Mrs. Woffington said when Sir Charles H[anbury] W[illiams] accused her of having seen Mr. Garrick that morning!"

Rousseau, the friend and neighbour of her uncle Granville at Calwich, calls himself one who has been taken captive in Mary Dewes's chains, "*et qui s'honore de les porter.*" In one of his graceful letters to Miss Dewes, Rousseau says:

"Si je vous ai laissé, ma belle voisine, une empreinte que vous avez bien gardée, vous m'en avez laissé une autre que j'ai gardée encore mieux. Vous n'avez mon cachet ['*Vitam impendere vero*'] que sur un papier qui peut le perdre, mais j'ai le votre empriente dans un cœur d'où rien ne peut l'effacer."

The Delanys returned to Ireland for a time, but the Dean rapidly became unable to perform his

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duties, and resolved to cross the Channel again in 1767, probably in order that Mrs. Delany might be near her friends on their rapidly approaching separation. In the following year he died at Bath, with great composure and resignation, calling his servant to close his eyes, and then praying for and blessing him. Mary Dewes was with her aunt during the Dean's last days, and as soon as Mrs. Delany could be induced to leave Bath the Duchess of Portland carried her to Bulstrode. The greater part of her time, for some years, appears to have been spent with this faithful friend, under whose care she recovered health and serenity. In 1770 she wrote—

"I am on the whole pretty well, though a stroke is given that cannot be entirely healed, though I apply all the lenients in my power."

Amongst the visits made with the Duchess of Portland was one to the Garricks.

"Mr. Garrick did the honours of his house very respectfully," Mrs. Delany tells her niece, "and though in high spirits, seemed sensible of the honour done to him. . . . As to Mrs. Garrick, the more one sees her, the better one must like her. She seems *never* to depart from a perfect propriety of behaviour accompanied with good sense and gentleness of manners, and I cannot help looking on her as a *wonderful* creature, considering all circumstances relating to her.* The house is singular (which you know I like), and

* Mrs. Garrick was born at Vienna, 1725. Her maiden name was Viegel, which she changed to Violette, at the command of



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seems to owe its prettiness and elegance to her good taste. . . . It has the air of belonging to a *genius*. We had an excellent dinner, nicely served, and when over went into the garden, a piece of irregular ground sloping down to the Thames, very well laid out and planted. The river appears beautiful from Shakespeare's Temple, where we drank tea and coffee, where there is a very fine statue of Shakespeare in white marble, and a great chair with a large carved frame that was *his own*, with a medallion of him fixed in the back. Lady Weymouth dined with us, and at six o'clock her fine children walked into the garden, and Mr. Garrick made himself as suitable a companion to the children as to the rest of the company, to their great delight."

The next important event in Mrs. Delany's family was the marriage of Mary Dewes to Mr. Port of Ilam, which, although a suitable one in every respect, met with the usual opposition from Mr. Granville of Calwich. At last the Duchess of Portland took matters in hand, invited the young couple to Bulstrode, and declared that they should not go away until they were married! Mrs. Delany often visited their beautiful home. They had the taste for country life and intellectual pursuits which distinguished all her family, and one of their guests at Ilam was Dr. Johnson, who told Mrs. Port that he had heard Edmund Burke

Maria Theresa, who admired her exquisite opera-dancing. She came to England in 1744, and on her marriage, five years later, the Earl of Burlington gave her a portion of £6000. Her sweetness of appearance and devotion to Garrick made all his friends hers, and among the warmest was Hannah More.

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describe Mrs. Delany as "a *truly great* woman of fashion; not only the woman of fashion of the present age but the woman of fashion of *all* ages, and the highest bred woman in the world."

In 1775, when Mrs. Delany's time was mainly divided between her own house in St. James's Place, Bulstrode, and Ilam, where a lovely little great-niece was added to its attractions, the strange story of the Duchess of Kingston and her alleged first marriage was "the talk of the town."

"The Duchess, who has been some time at Calais," writes Mrs. Delany, "has a ship of her own, which she sends on her errands to England, etc. On last hearing it was coming into harbour, she went immediately on board, and asked the captain if he had brought her birds. 'No, madam; I have not brought your birds, but *I have brought Captain Harvey!*'" [her first husband], "on which her graceless Grace hurried out of the ship with all possible speed."

In the same year Mrs. Delany describes herself as

"A flaunting, frolicsome old gentlewoman, who was on Friday at Mrs. Walsingham's catches and glees, until past eleven o'clock! She was much entertained with the music; she was also a little amused and abundantly astonished at the pyramidal, towering head-dresses, and the busy hum *not only* of female voices, though I must own they predominated. Well did the witty man say at a late assembly to Miss Seymour (who speaks several languages, and all imperfectly) that now he had *seen* the Tower of Babel, and *heard* the confusion of tongues!"

Mrs. Delany and her friends were indeed a

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group of most active, "sprightly" old ladies. She remarks that she is not *quite* so young, lovely, and blooming as her cousin and contemporary, Duchess Kitty; while Lady Gower, the same age (seventy-five), "walks as usual in the hottest hour of the hottest day, but has disused riding on horseback. 'Tis *only on account of the flies*,' however!"

It was not until 1778 that the Duchess of Portland presented Mrs. Delany to George III. and Queen Charlotte, at a breakfast given to them at Bulstrode. They inspected and admired her needlework and her "book of flowers," * requesting

* "This marvellous work," says Lady Llanover, "at first called her 'Herbal,' afterwards her 'Flora,' Mrs. Delany began at the age of seventy-two, and continued for *thirteen years*, encouraged by the admiration it excited in the Duchess of Portland. It was sung (but very erroneously) by Dr. Darwin in his 'Botanic Garden;' Sir Joseph Banks said that it contained 'the *only* imitations of nature from which he could venture to describe botanically any plant without the least fear of committing an error;' and Sir Joshua Reynolds declared it to be unrivalled in perfection of outline, delicacy of cutting, accuracy of shading and perspective, and harmony and brilliance of colour. Her process, so far as it can be described in a short summary, was to place the growing plant, or a branch of it, before a sheet of black paper doubled so as to form a folding screen; then by her eye she cut out each flower, 'all the lights and shades and various tints' being represented by different coloured paper, pasted together, which she procured from 'captains of vessels coming from China, and from paper stainers, from whom she bought pieces of paper in which the colours had run, and produced unusual tints.' In this manner more than a thousand plants were faithfully imitated."

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her to go to Windsor next day to see "all their children together." They received her there with the utmost kindness, and she says:

"Though age and my long retirement from Court made me feel timid on being called on to make my appearance, I soon found myself perfectly at ease."

This was the beginning of a really close and genuine friendship which the King and Queen manifested for Mrs. Delany. They took an interest in all her pursuits, sent for her to any entertainments which they thought would interest her, supplied her with flowers to copy from the houses at Kew, and often gave her little souvenirs. made more valuable by kind inscriptions. At "the Queen's House" in Windsor, in 1785, Mrs. Delany heard *The Provoked Husband* read by Mrs. Siddons.

"She read standing, and had a desk with candles before her. She abridged the play, but introduced John Moody's account of the journey, and read it admirably. Lord and Lady Townley's reconciliation she worked up finely, and made very affecting."

But it was the death of the Dowager Duchess of Portland, in this year, after a very short illness, which occasioned the royal couple to show the full extent of their sympathy for Mrs. Delany. They knew that the two friends had been more than sisters, and thinking that Mrs. Delany might

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miss the change afforded by her long and frequent visits to Bulstrode, and wishing to see her often without causing her fatigue, they gave her a house at Windsor, and £300 a year with which to keep it up. This sum the Queen herself brought her quarterly in a pocket-book, "that it might not appear as a pension, or be diminished by taxation."

The King and Queen went daily to the house while it was being got ready for Mrs. Delany, personally directing all improvements and additions, and they took great pleasure in furnishing it. In August Miss Port wrote to her mother:

"Though the King is *the overseer*, which of course must hurry the workmen, we find it will be three weeks before the house will be ready, and three weeks longer in London at this time of year would be bad for Aunt Delany's health; for this reason the Queen kindly sent Miss Planta to say that till the house was fit for her reception she hoped my aunt would 'occupy an apartment in the castle at Windsor,' and on my aunt's introducing me she said, 'The Queen named that young lady particularly, and expects her too.'"

And the Queen wrote—

"MY DEAREST MRS. DELANY,—If coming to me will not fatigue your spirits *too* much, I shall receive you with open arms, and am

"Your affectionate friend,
"CHARLOTTE."

One evening during their occupation of these rooms, Miss Port heard a knock at the door when

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she was sitting alone, and asked, "Who is there?" A voice replied, "It is *me*." "Me may stay where he is," cried the lively girl. Another knock, and she repeated her question. The voice again answered, "It is ME." "*Me* is impertinent, and may go about his business!" she said indignantly. On the knocking being renewed, some person who was with Miss Port persuaded her to open the door and see who was so persistent, when, to her unspeakable dismay, she found it was the King! All she could utter was, "What *shall* I say?" "Nothing at all," said the King. "You were very right to be cautious who you admitted."

When the house was at last ready the King's special message to Mrs. Delany was to desire her "only to take herself, her niece [great-niece, Miss Port], clothes and attendants, as stores of every kind would be laid in for her."

Mrs. Delany arrived at her new home in the evening of September 20th, and found the King waiting to receive her, and express his hope that she would find the house comfortable and agreeable. The Queen walked over (Mrs. Delany's garden joined that of the Queen's Lodge) next morning, and repeated in the strongest terms their wish that she should be as easy and happy as they could possibly make her, saying that they desired to

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visit her "like friends." Thenceforward some of the royal family drank tea with her every day, unless she was at the Castle, to which she was carried in "a very elegant new chair," a present from the King. The Queen sent her a beautiful spinning-wheel, and asked for some lessons in spinning; and sometimes, unattended and unannounced, would join her at her early dinner and praise her "orange pudding."

The King and Queen delighted in hearing anecdotes and recollections of Mrs. Delany's youth, which she gave with great humour. One favourite story told how, when she was a girl in Gloucestershire, she was invited to dine at the house of a gentleman in the neighbourhood. As there was "company," she was smartly dressed, with her hair arranged for the party, and only a "hat-brim" to keep the sun from her eyes; and as the road was too bad for a carriage, she was mounted on a pillion behind a steady old domestic. On their way they met a pack of hounds; Miss Granville was enchanted, the horse's mettle was roused, and old John was persuaded to join in the chase. The consequence was, her smart gown was rent in many places, her smart shoes were lost, she kept the dinner waiting, and dreaded returning home in her tattered garments; and the

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wild glee of the chase cost many penitential tears. It was, says Lady Llanover—

"The picture Mrs. Delany drew of herself in her pink lutestring petticoat, following the hounds on a pillion, with her 'brim' flying in the air and her feet without shoes, which entertained the King and Queen so much."

At Mrs. Delany's Windsor house Fanny Burney, who had been introduced to her by Mrs. Chapone, first saw the King and Queen; it was chiefly through Mrs. Delany's (perhaps mistaken) kindness that she obtained the Court appointment which supplied her Diary with so many painful and so many amusing pages, and it is evident from the Diary that, unsuitable and unpleasant as the little authoress's post of "dresser" was, it must have been infinitely more so but for the wise counsels, ready sympathy, and constant support of Mrs. Delany. How hard she strove to keep Miss Burney out of the many scrapes in which her vanity and morbid self-consciousness involved her, is most artlessly recorded by Fanny herself, and there can be little doubt that much of the Queen's forbearance with her was prompted by her wish to gratify her old friend.

Fanny was undoubtedly a very trying waiting-woman, partly because she was made for better things and was so fully aware of it; and what

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the Queen liked best in her was her genuine love for Mrs. Delany, who on her part had a very high opinion of the authoress of "Evelina"—an opinion by no means shared by Lady Llanover, who in her editorial notes is wroth with what she considers Fanny's many misrepresentations. The tone in which the "Diary" records Mrs. Delany's wrongs and distresses is certainly calculated to mislead, but *au reste* Lady Llanover's refutations come to little more than that Mrs. Delany was under no pecuniary obligations to the Duchess of Portland, and that Fanny Burney was perhaps not *quite* so intimate with Mrs. Delany as she wished to make it appear. In support of these positions Mrs. Astley, Mrs. Delany's waiting-woman, is called upon to testify; and her fine scorn of writing-folk is exquisite:

"I am grieved," she says, "to think Madame D'Arblay should have brought forward the name of my beloved mistress in the way she has in her late public work. To Mrs. Delany she was under such *great obligations*, and from that circumstance will enjoy £100 a year for life.* *But authors and authoresses take great latitude, they make mountains of molehills.* . . . As to Madame D'Arblay's looking over Mrs. Delany's letters and papers, I doubt the truth of it; . . . but if Madame D'A. happened to look over one letter or manuscript, *that was enough for an authoress to build upon!*"

* The pension Miss Burney received from the Queen on resigning her appointment as "dresser."

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In the autumn of 1787 Mrs. Delany had an illness, during which a favourite bird, which had belonged to the Duchess of Portland and which she kept in her own room, died. The Queen had one of the same kind which she valued extremely, and fearing that the bird's loss would distress her old friend, she took her own bird to Mrs. Delany's house and placed it in the empty cage, cautioning every one not to let her discover the change. The Queen had but few more opportunities of showing this thoughtful affection. In the following January Mrs. Delany moved to her house in St. James's Place, and early in April she was seized with inflammation of the lungs, for which her doctors ordered bark.

"She looked distressed," her waiting-maid says, and told them "she always had a presentiment that if bark were given her it would cause her death," giving her reasons for the fear. But the doctors said there was no alternative, it was the only medicine that would remove the fever. "Seeing the dear lady so averse to taking it," Mrs. Astley continues, "I offered to keep her secret and to put it away." "Oh no!" she said, "I never was reckoned obstinate, and I will not die so." She took the medicine, and some hours afterwards she died, in her eighty-eighth year.

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To the last she retained all her faculties, and a friend who saw her a few months before her death, after a separation of twenty years, wrote:

"I saw the same apprehension, attention, benevolence, and enjoyment of every pleasant circumstance in her situation that you remember in her. Her inquiries, her remarks, her whole conversation, are full of life—and that kind heart is as warm as ever!"

Mrs. Delany was buried in St. James's, Piccadilly, her parish church; her epitaph was written by Dr. Hurd, Bishop of Worcester.

In the dark days that were approaching for Queen Charlotte, when the madness and blindness of the King, the riotous life and undutiful conduct of the Prince of Wales, and her own growing unpopularity rent her heart, she must have sorely missed the loving and admiring friend in whom she had freely confided, because her discretion was as faultless as her affection was disinterested and sincere.

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# MRS. MONTAGU: "THE QUEEN OF THE BLUE STOCKINGS."

THE Robinsons of Rokeby, descended from the Scottish Barons of Strowan, were, in the early part of last century, a fine old north-country family of more than local importance. The head of the elder branch, often met with in the annals of the period under the sobriquet of "Long Tom Robinson," was an English Squire of the order familiar in melodrama, so inseparable from his hunting-suit that he entered Parisian society in it, and was greeted by a French Abbé with the gravely sarcastic inquiry whether he were "Robinson Crusoe."

"Long Tom" was made a baronet. On his death the title passed to his brother Richard, a clergyman, who, after becoming Archbishop of Armagh, was created Baron Rokeby, with remainder to Matthew Robinson, of West Layton Hall, the only male representative of a cadet branch of the family. Matthew married the heiress of Robert Drake, and had twelve children,

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of whom nine survived infancy. Two were daughters, both of pronounced literary tastes. The elder, in after years, from her beauty, wealth, acquirements, and position as the centre of an admiring circle, gained the title of "Queen of the Blue Stockings."

Elizabeth Robinson was born at York in 1720, and one of her earliest recollections was of being taken to see the funeral of a Dean of York, who was buried in the grand old Minster with great state and solemnity. The impression made by the scene on so imaginative a child was very strong, and may have helped to produce a tendency, seen throughout her letters, to speculate on death and a future existence, even while enjoying the present life with all the ardour of youth and high spirits. When she was seven years old some property was inherited by her mother, which caused the family abode to be changed to Coveney in Cambridgeshire, fortunately for Elizabeth's intellectual development, as she became a great favourite of the learned Dr. Conyers Middleton, her grandmother's second husband. He made the beautiful and intelligent child his frequent companion, and allowed her to be present at the parties he gave to his learned brethren of the University, requiring her after-

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wards to give an account of their abstruse discussions, on the ground that, though she might understand little or nothing of them at the time, the habit of attention could not be too early acquired. Either at his instance or that of her father Elizabeth had, by the time she was eight years old, copied the whole of the *Spectator;* a gigantic task, but one which, no doubt, helped to make her the fluent and copious letter-writer she became at a very early age.

The home atmosphere, too, was mentally stimulating. Mr. Robinson was a clever man, still young (he had married at eighteen), and famous for his talent as an amateur landscape painter, and his conversational ability. He found the country life, to which the cares of his estates and the interests of his large family condemned him, very oppressive. "My papa," wrote Elizabeth, at eleven years old, to her earliest correspondent and life-long friend, Lady Margaret Cavendish Harley, daughter of the Earl of Oxford, "is a little vapoured, and last night after two hours' silence, he broke out into a great exclamation against the country, and concluded by saying that living in the country was sleeping with one's eyes open. If he sleeps all day I am sure he dreams very much of London."

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He tried to relieve the rural tedium by encouraging the lively chatter and precocious repartee of his little daughter, and prompting his children to form a sort of domestic debating society, at which the boys and girls, all studious and fond of discussion, used to "struggle for the mastery in wit, or the superiority in argument," while the mother, "whose frame of mind," says Elizabeth's sententious nephew and biographer, "partook rather of the gentle sedateness of good sense than of the eccentricities of genius," * was called "the Speaker," presiding over the debates, and keeping order amongst her active-minded and voluble family.

They were not by any means mere bookworms. Elizabeth says of herself that she was "as fond of dancing as if she had been bitten by a tarantula;" and, accompanied by her body-guard of brothers —"seven of them, and I would not part with one for a kingdom!"—would walk or drive eight miles in winter to dance to the music of a blind fiddler, and return at two in the morning, "mightily pleased that I had been so well entertained." †

* "Letters of Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu." Published by Matthew Montagu, M.P. 2nd edit., 1809, vol. i. p. 7.

† Her love of dancing, she explains, is quite independent of all other considerations: "I shall dance to either a Whig or a Tory tune, as it happens, for I am not like monkeys, who will only cut

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Or they would journey an equal distance to see a play, with a party of relations and friends, after which the gentlemen invited the ladies to supper at an inn, dispersing "at two" (which seems to have been for them as inexorable as Cinderella's stroke of midnight) for their various homes; Elizabeth thinking the pleasures of the evening fitly crowned by their carriage being upset on the return journey, at which, she says, she fairly "squalled for joy," and, to complete her felicity, had to stand half an hour in "the most refreshing rain and the coolest north wind" she ever felt, while repairs were being effected. The pursuit of pleasure in those times and places was not without its penalties. In another letter Elizabeth describes another overthrow, adding philosophically, "I always think one visits in the country at the hazard of one's bones, but fear is never so powerful with me as to make me stay at home." Writing a little later to her friend Margaret, then become Duchess of Portland, she says—

"Her Ladyship made a ball a few days ago, to which she did our family the honour to invite them, and as we had got into our coach with our ball airs and dancing shoes, at five miles

their capers for King George. I will dance for any man or monarch in Christendom. Nay, were it even a Mahometan or idolatrous king, I should not make much scruple of it. . . . Would you think a person so near akin to me as a brother would run away from a ball?"



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of our journey we came to a brook so swelled by the rain that it looked like a river, and the water, we were told, was up to the coach seat. And as I had never heard of any balls in the Elysian Fields, and do not so much as know whether the ghosts of departed beaux wear pumps, I thought it better to reserve ourselves for the ridotto than hazard drowning for this ball."

Mr. Robinson is said to have been a sarcastic observer, who found plenty of food for ridicule in his rustic surroundings, and Elizabeth inherited his turn of mind. With the impertinence of seventeen she ridicules the *affaires du cœur* of her seniors :—

"Lord Winchelsea has ceased his douceurs to Miss Palmer," she writes, "which I was sorry for. I always think a languishing swain of forty (next to a credulous virgin of thirty) the most diverting sight in the world. Solomon said well that there was a time for all things. There is a time to sigh and a time to smile, but the sigh of an old man is a groan, and the smile of an old maid is a grin."

Her father himself was not exempt from the comments of this saucy critic. To country folks, she says—

"A squeaking fiddle is an occasion, and a moonlight night an opportunity to go ten miles on bad roads at any time. I must tell your Grace that my papa forgets twenty years and nine children and dances as nimbly as any of the quorum, but is now and then mortified by hearing the ladies say : 'Old Mr. Robinson! Hey sides and turn your daughter ;' other ladies who have a mind to appear young, say, 'Well, there is my poor grandpapa, he could no more dance so !' Then comes an old bachelor of fifty and shakes him by the

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hand, and cries, 'Why, you dance like one of us young fellows!' Another more injudicious than the rest, says by way of compliment, 'Who would think you had six fine children taller than yourself!'" *

By this time the family had removed to Mount Morris, near Hythe, another estate inherited by Mrs. Robinson, whence an alarm of small-pox banished them for a time to Canterbury, where, she says, "we have met with a great deal of civility, and have nothing but messages and visits from deans, deacons, canons, and the rest of the church militant here upon earth." She finds it dull, however, and is enchanted at the prospect of an escape to Bath. "I am afraid that, with the gaieties of the place, and the spirits the waters give, I shall be perfect *sal volatile*, and open my mouth and evaporate."

Bath rather disappointed her on the score of gaiety, but could not damp her irrepressible spirits:—

"The day after I arrived I went to the Ladies' Coffee House, where I heard of nothing but rheumatism in the shoulder, sciatica in the hip, and gout in the toe. . . . 'How d'ye do?' is all one hears in the morning, and 'What is trumps?' in the afternoon. . . . As for the men, except Lord Noel Somerset, they are altogether abominable. Our beaux here may make a rent in a woman's fan, they will never make a hole in her heart! I should be glad to send you

* "Letters of Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu," vol. i. part i. p. 44.

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some news, but all the news of the place would be like the bills of mortality. We hear of nothing but, 'Mr. Such-a-one is not abroad to-day.' 'Oh no,' says another, 'poor gentleman, he died this morning.' Then another cries, 'My party was made for quadrille to-night, but one of the gentlemen has had a second stroke of the palsy, and cannot come.' Indeed the only thing one can do to-day we did not do the day before, is to die. Not that I would be hurried by a love of variety and novelty to do so irreparable a thing as dying."

About this time Miss Robinson's extreme animation, both mental and bodily, earned her amongst her intimate friends the pet name of *Fidget*. It originated with the Duchess of Portland, to whom she once wrote in reference to an old-fashioned table, which, she said, had more feet than a caterpillar—"Why so many legs should be required to stand still while I can *fidget* on two, I own surprises me."

"Fidget is a most entertaining creature," Mrs. Pendarves tells Lady Throckmorton, "but as I believe you are better acquainted with her than I am, I shall not attempt to draw a likeness. She would prove too difficult a task for my pen as well as pencil. For there are some delicate touches that would foil the skill of a much abler artist than I pretend to be."*

This mirthful young woman had her moments of seriousness and deep feeling. Writing a New Year letter to Mrs. Donellan, she wishes her as the best gift of all, faithful friends:—

* "Autobiography and Correspondence of Mrs. Delany," edited by Lady Llanover. Bentley, 1861. Vol. ii. p. 134.

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"There is nothing so mortifying as the inconstancy of a friend, for every other fault may be excused, but that is aggravated by affection; and the more one loves, the less one can forgive it. I think great tenderness is required to make one happy in a friend, for if they have not as much tenderness as you have sensibility you are not sure of that gentle treatment and delicate behaviour which makes friendship delightful. I believe the reason why matrimony is so seldom agreeable, even amongst people of virtue and goodness, is a want of attention to each other's pleasure. How easy it is to make any trifle obliging, or otherwise, by the manner in which it is done! A look, a tone of voice, will make the same words insinuate kindness or rebuke."

These early letters give a very complete picture of the country life of the period. On one occasion, Elizabeth was sent away from home because her sister Sarah was attacked by small-pox. Her place of banishment was a farmhouse, the master of which, though very well off as incomes were then reckoned, was a miser, whose test of the value of everything was "just as much as it would bring." When his fair young guest praised his trees, he said, "Yes, they were brave timber, and would sell well;" when she added that they would afford a fine shelter for her favourite rooks, he replied that he "loved them well enough, but they would eat the corn." "I verily believe," she indignantly comments, "he would annihilate half God's works to have his granary the fuller." Elizabeth remained much in her own room, low-ceilinged, with a window

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so overgrown with ivy that, she says, since she took possession she had never seen the sun. Here she studied classic authors in the version of her old friend Dr. Middleton, and wrote to her numerous correspondents. To the Duchess of Portland she says—"They have sent me some chicken for supper, but alas! can one eat one's acquaintance? These inoffensive companions of my retirement, can I devour them? I find myself reduced to a vegetable diet, not as a Pythagorean for fear of removing the soul of a friend, but to avoid destroying the body of an acquaintance. There is not a sheep, a calf, a lamb, a goose, a turkey in the neighbourhood, with which I am not intimately acquainted." Great was the joy when the sisters were allowed to see each other again, though as a precaution the meeting was to be in the fields, and only at a distance of four feet; and Sarah "kept her hat well over her face," lest her sister should see there the still fresh traces of the dreadful malady. In the same year one of her brothers was to be inoculated, and though she has "a very good opinion of that method of having the small-pox," she confesses great anxiety until it is over, and has not courage to undergo the same ordeal herself. Fortunately she escaped the scourge and preserved her charming appearance.

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"In her youth," says her nephew, "her beauty was most admired for the peculiar animation and expression of her blue eyes, with high arched dark eyebrows, and the contrast of her brilliant complexion with her dark brown hair. She was of middle stature, and stooped a little."

When Miss Robinson had entered her twenties, her friends became anxious for her settlement in life, but the attentions of her neighbours were not acceptable to her :—

"To love calves one should be a calf," she says, "and to love country squires one should be a country damsel. Now having assumed somewhat of a higher character than that of a calf or a damsel, I do not find great delight in their company. I think of the two creatures I best like the calf, for he stares at me as if he admired me, but never dresses up that admiration in an awkward phrase. Both calf and squire love the dairy-maid better in their hearts, and only look on me as a stranger."

At eighteen she had thus described her ideal lover to the Duchess :—

"I will tell you what sort of man I desire, which is above ten times as good as I deserve, for gratitude is a great virtue, and I would have cause to be thankful. He should have a great deal of sense and prudence to direct and instruct me, much wit to divert me, beauty to please me, good humour to indulge me in the right, and reprove me gently when I am in the wrong ; money enough to afford me more than I can want and as much as I can wish ; and constancy to like me as long as other people do—that is, till my face is wrinkled by age, or scarred by the small-pox, and after that I shall expect only civility ; for, as Mrs. Clive sings,

'All I hope of mortal man,
Is to love me while he can !'"

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Miss Robinson was merciless to the real suitors who fell painfully short of this standard. Of some unfortunate "Mr. B——" who had been peremptorily dismissed, she writes: "He takes his misfortunes so much to heart that I really pity him." But the cruel girl shows her pity in a very odd way, adding—"If he should die I will have him buried in Westminster Abbey, next to the woman who died of a prick of her finger, for it is quite as extraordinary. And he shall have his figure languishing in wax, with 'Miss Robinson *fecit*' written over his head."

Elizabeth's favourite aversion was *gourmandise*, and in her girlhood one of the Cathedral dignitaries was notorious for it.

"I never was in company with our Dean," she writes, "but his conversation ran upon eating. He must certainly preach very bad fast sermons, but for the fatted calf, the quails and manna in the wilderness, no man could make a better discourse upon them."

Her bright eyes were open to all the peculiarities of her neighbours, and she made notes of them for the amusement of her beloved Duchess, who must, from all we read of her in contemporary memoirs, especially in those of Mrs. Delany, and in her own letters, have been one of the most attractive women of her time—faultless in domestic life, charitable, gentle, gay in spirits,

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dignified in society, an incomparable wife and friend. She was a beauty and heiress, adored by her relations and surrounded by flatterers, but absolutely unspoilt. The Duchess was as happy in her married life as she deserved to be, and her family circle shone by contrast at a time when, as her friend wrote—"the world is mad, I think—'such pains they take to get a husband or a wife to hate.'"

When her friend was indisposed, Elizabeth was summoned to entertain her guests and superintend her household. During one of these visits she writes: "Bulstrode is much improved without doors; peace, cheerfulness, and joy were always within, so that new furniture and fine pictures hardly make an addition to its former charms." The only thing she disliked there was the cold, which kept her more indoors than suited her country habits, but as usual she "salves her vexations with cheerfulness."

"My chief exercise is *laughing*," she says, "but whenever the weather permits, I take a wholesome bleak walk on a terrace. Mrs. Pendarves and I walked out together this morning for about an hour, and happily beguiled the time by talking of our sisters, and the comfort of sisterly friendship."

The minute details of what Elizabeth calls her "Journal" to her sister show such simple habits

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and early hours in a ducal home as look strange in our more artificial day :—

"For the benefit of my constitution I starved myself in the north wind this morning till one, then for the good of my spiritualities I attended chapel till half after one, and from that time till two employed myself in the necessary decorations of my person. Then I was summoned by the dinner bell to the dining-room, where I ate as if I were no goddess, though the Poet Laureate of Canterbury says '*J'en vaux trois*,' and having drunk, or rather, as the celestials say, quaffed a glass of Madeira, my spirits were not elevated above the weight of ham and chickens till an hour after dinner, and then I proposed to write. But the poetical Dr. Young" [of the "Night Thoughts"] "came in and entertained my mental faculties with 'a feast of reason and a flow of soul' till six, and left me a notion or two which I could not digest till tea came in. Whether the warm water relaxed the obstinacy of my former opinion or not I cannot tell, but at last I understood all very clearly, and am come down to write just before the hour of cribbage, at which I have got great applause as a genius—it being the first time I ever attained fame at cards. . . . Believe me, I would rather write to you than get the knave or twenty in crib ; in spite of fifteen two, fifteen four, and a pair six, my thoughts are with you."

To Mr. Freind she writes :—

"I wish you could see the table I am writing at. It is adorned with four of the Duchess of Portland's children. They are as beautiful, and, what is not always the happiness of the beautiful, as innocent as angels. They are building card-houses, and I think at the grand Tower of Babel there was not a greater confusion of tongues. Even in this amusement I see the different bent of their tempers. One is careful of the foundation of the house, another is ambitious to have

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it high, though the fabric totters with its eminence. Another is impatient to have it finished, and the fourth wants me to put something in it that it will not hold. How harmless is this exercise of their little passions!"

In 1742, Miss Robinson at last made her election amongst her many admirers. She had long laughed at country squires and town beaux, at soldiers and fops. The man on whom she bestowed her hand was Edward Montagu, grandson of the first Earl of Sandwich, a man of unblemished character, great gentleness and amiability of temper, and considerably her senior —"a mathematician of great eminence, and a coal-owner of great wealth."

The wedding took place on August 5th, 1742, and on the following day she wrote to the Duchess of Portland:—

"I return your Grace a thousand thanks for your letter. The good wishes of a friend are of themselves a happiness, and believe me, I have always thought myself the nearer being happy because I knew you wished me so. If your affection for me will last as long as my love and gratitude to you, I think it will stay with me till the latest moment I shall have in this world. . . . Mr. Freind will tell you I behaved magnanimously; not one cowardly tear, I assure you, did I shed at the solemn altar, though my mind was in no mirthful mood indeed. I have a great hope of happiness; the world, as you say, speaks well of Mr. Montagu, and I have many obligations to him which must gain my particular esteem; but such a change of life must furnish one with a thousand anxious thoughts."

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The bride's old friend and step-grandfather, Dr. Conyers Middleton, wrote her a letter of stately congratulation, beginning "Madam," and expressing his "paternal pleasure" at the good fortune of one

"Whose amiable qualities I have been the witness of from her tenderest years, and to whom I have ever been wishing and ominating everything that is good. I have always expected from your singular merit and accomplishments that they would recommend you in proper time to an advantageous and honourable match. . . . You have the fairest prospect of happiness now open before you by your marriage with a gentleman not only of figure and fortune, but of great knowledge and understanding."

Mrs. Montagu's cheerful letters show how these anticipations were fulfilled. To Mrs. Freind she says:—

"I think we increase in esteem without decaying in complaisance, and I hope we shall always remember Mr. Freind and the fifth of August with thankfulness. I am infinitely obliged to him for not letting the knot be tied by the hands of an ordinary bungler; he was very good in coming to London on purpose."

Much later, she writes to Mr. Freind himself:—

"I know it will please you to hear that I have, every day since you made me a wife, had more reason to thank you for it. I have the honour and happiness to be made the guest of a heart furnished with the best and greatest virtues —honesty, integrity, and universal benevolence, with the most engaging affection for every one who particularly belongs to him. No desire of power but to do good, no use

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of it but to make happy. . . . Since I married I have never heard him say an ill-natured word to any one."

Mrs. Delany describes her, shortly after her marriage, as looking "handsome, fat, and merry; in excellent spirits, and very happy." She was charmed with her new home at Allerthorpe :—

"The prettiest estate, and in the best order I ever saw. . . . In this parish Dr. Robinson, our general uncle"—Mrs. Freind was Mrs. Montagu's cousin—"has founded a school and an almshouse, where the young are taught industry, the old content. I saw the old women with the bucks upon their sleeves at church, and the sight gave me pleasure; heraldry does not always descend with such honour as when charity leads her by the hand. Our uncle did this good while he was alive. It was not that soul-thrift that would save itself with another's money."

Not charmed, however, with her country neighbours, whom she describes as "drunken and vicious, and worse than hypocrites—profligates." "I am very happy that drinking is not within our walls," she adds. "We have not had one person disordered by liquor since we came down, though most of the poor ladies have had more hogs in their dining-room than ever they had in their hog-stye."

As member for Huntingdon, parliamentary duties often called Mr. Montagu to London, but his visits there were made as short as possible. Though his tastes and pursuits all led him to

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country retirement, he by no means imposed his own preference for seclusion on his young and beautiful wife. She went where she pleased, always sending him full accounts of her gaieties, and evidently relying on his sympathy; and she speaks with the warmest gratitude of his consideration for her wishes. Her friends were always made cordially welcome at his country seats; and, to her special delight, it was understood that all her young brothers should spend their vacations with the Montagus.

Sometimes she would have preferred that Mr. Montagu should share her taste for society, but she says that she can occasionally endure the seclusion he enjoyed "without being out of humour or out of spirits;" adding, "I have lately acquired the constant society of a screech-owl, who has taken up its residence under my dressing-room window, and utters such a number of melancholy notes that I have been tempted to ask it whether it stays in the country against its inclination."

The first great cloud gathered over Mrs. Montagu's sunshiny life when she lost her infant son in 1744. Her letters show that she had been an adoring mother, and in spite of her natural love for society, no place was so sweet to her as the home that held her husband and child. When

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thanking the Duchess of Portland for her sympathy, she says she would have replied before, but could not command her thoughts

"so as to write what might be understood. I am well enough as to health of body, but God knows the sickness of the soul is far worse. . . . Poor Mr. Montagu shows me an example of patience and fortitude, though undoubtedly he feels as much sorrow as I can do, for he loved his child as much as ever parent could."

In the following year Mrs. Montagu had partially recovered her spirits. She writes from Tunbridge Wells :—

"I have had great joy in Dr. Young, whom I disturbed in a reverie. At first he started, then bowed, fell back into a surprise, began a speech, relapsed into astonishment two or three times, forgot what he had been saying, began a new subject, and so went on. I told him your Grace desired he would write longer letters—to which he cried 'Ha!' most emphatically, and I leave you to interpret what it meant. He has made a friendship with one person here whom you would not imagine to have been made for his bosom friend. You would, perhaps, suppose it was a bishop, a dean, a prebend, a clergyman of exemplary life, or a layman of most virtuous conversation. . . . You would not guess that this associate of the Doctor's was—old Cibber! . . . Before he went away the Doctor carried Mrs. Rolt and myself to Tunbridge Town, five miles from the Wells, to see some fine old ruins. The manner of the journey was admirable ; nor did I, at the end of it, admire the object we went to see more than the means by which we saw it. . . . First rode the Doctor on a tall steed, decently caparisoned in dark grey ; next ambled Mrs. Rolt on a hackney horse, lean as the famed Rozinante, but in shape more resembling Sancho's ass ; then followed your humble servant on a milk-white

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palfrey, whose reverence for humankind induced him to be governed by a creature not half as strong, and, I fear, scarce thrice as wise as himself. By this enthusiasm of his I rode on in safety, and at leisure to observe the company; especially the two figures that brought up the rear. The first was my servant, valiantly armed with two uncharged pistols; the last was the Doctor's man, whose uncombed hair so resembled the mane of the horse he rode one could not help imagining they were of kin, and wishing, for the honour of the family, that they had had one comb between them; on his head was a velvet cap, much resembling a black saucepan, and at his side hung a little basket. . . . To tell you how the dogs barked at us, the children squalled, and the men and women stared, would take up too much time."

On their way home the mischievous lady played her friend a trick:—

"The night silenced all but our divine Doctor, who sometimes uttered thoughts fit to be spoken in a season when all Nature seems to be hushed and hearkening. I followed, gathering wisdom as I went, till I found by my horse's stumbling that I was in a bad road, and that the blind was leading the blind. So I placed my servant between the Doctor and myself, which he not perceiving, went on in a most philosophical strain, to the great amazement of my poor clown of a servant, who, not making any answer to all the fine things he heard, the Doctor, wondering I was dumb and grieving that I was stupid, looked round—declared his surprise, and desired the man to trot on as before."

Mrs. Montagu's "conversation parties," as they were sometimes called, were first established as a protest against and an alternative to the card parties, at which gambling had become frantic and ruinous. But they were also intended to

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raise the tone of conversation itself above the empty chatter and worse than empty scandal generally heard in fashionable assemblies. Mrs. Montagu began with literary breakfasts, of which Madame du Bocage, who visited London in 1750, gives the following description :—

"We breakfasted to-day at Lady (*sic*) Montagu's, in a closet lined with painted paper of Pekin, and furnished with the choicest movables of China. A long table, covered with the finest linen, presented to the view a thousand glittering cups, which contained coffee, chocolate, biscuits, cream, butter, toasts, and exquisite tea. You must understand that there is no good tea to be had anywhere but in London. The mistress of the house, who deserves to be served at the table of the gods, poured it out herself. This is the custom, and in order to conform to it, the dress of the English ladies, which suits exactly to their stature, the white apron and the pretty straw hat, become them with the greatest propriety, not only in their own apartments, but at noon in St. James's Park, where they walk with the stately and majestic gait of nymphs."

These breakfasts were gradually superseded by the evening parties, to which, whenever ladies of literary tastes presided and scholars were invited, the name of "*Bas-bleu* Assemblies" became attached.* To enumerate all Mrs. Montagu's

* This name is said to have been derived from Mrs. Vesey's reply to Mr. Stillingfleet, who refused an invitation to one of these literary gatherings on the score of his unsuitable attire. "Pooh!" she said, "don't mind dress—come in your blue stockings." Mr. Hayward, however, in his edition of Mrs. Piozzi's autobiography,



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regular circle would be a roll-call of the men and women of her time, distinguished in art, literature, and science, together with a sprinkling of such charming leaders of society as the Duchess of Portland, who, without entering the artistic arena themselves, were the graceful patrons of those who did.

Garrick, whose fascinating wife was one of Mrs. Montagu's chief favourites, sometimes electrified the guests by reciting scenes from *Macbeth* and *Lear*. The French Ambassador and Madame de Noailles were present on one of these occasions, and Mrs. Montagu wrote to the great actor afterwards: "They had not the least idea such things were within the compass of art and nature." Madame de Noailles was so enthusiastic in her thanks for so much intellectual enjoyment, expressed as she was descending the stairs, that her hostess feared she would forget where she was, slip, and break her neck.

quotes a note made by a lady in 1816 giving a totally different version of the origin of the sobriquet: "Lady Crewe told me that her mother (Mrs. Greville), the Duchess of Portland, and Mrs. Montagu were the first who imitated the famous conversation parties at Rue St. Honoré. Madame de Polignac, one of the first guests, came in blue silk stockings, then the newest Paris fashion. All the lady members of Mrs. Montagu's club adopted the mode. A French gentleman, after spending an evening at Mrs. Montagu's, wrote to tell a friend of the charming intellectual party, who had but one rule—'they wear blue stockings as a distinction.'"

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Her letters, although none were ever, perhaps, so much in need of pruning, abound in quotable passages of tenderness or humour. To Mrs. Donellan (the sweet singer who added such a charm to the friendly gatherings at Bulstrode and Mrs. Delany's house) she writes: "Mutual friendships are built on mutual wants. Were you perfectly happy you would not want me; but there is no being but the One perfect who is alone and without companion and equal." To the Duchess of Portland: "We talk of you and drink your health as much as you can expect from sober people. Had I married a Tory fox-hunter he might have toasted you in a larger draught, but we temperate Whigs toast you in reason." "Solomon," she observes, "said of laughter, what is it? And of mirth, what doeth it? Vanity, and a good set of teeth, would have taught him the ends and purposes of laughing!" Shell-work was one of the crazes of her time: "Mrs. Donellan and I are going to make a shell frame for a looking-glass," she says. "I think a looking-glass properest for our first work, as everybody will be sure to find something they like in it." Writing to the Duchess of Portland after a country visit: "We had great variety in the house," she tells her friend; "children in cradles, and old women in

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elbow-chairs. I think the family may be classed like the three tenses—present, past, and future."

In March, 1759, she writes from Hill Street, alluding to the fashionable remedy of the day: "Mrs. Evelyn looks ill, and is gone into the country for amendment. For my part I desire nothing of trees but the *bark* at this time of year." She disbelieved in voluntary solitude: "Nobody," she said, "lives out of the world who is fit to live in it."

"I assure you I never made a fool of a wit in my life," she tells Dr. Monsey; "every boarding-school girl can do it. My nobler ambition was to make wits of fools, and I was encouraged in the attempt by a fable of Mr. Dryden's. But lord! how poets lie. I was long ago convinced it is not to be done, and so laid aside all endeavours to turn men's heads."

"You despise, you say," she replies to the same correspondent, "all the old women who wish to be young. Your contempt is very comprehensive, it takes in all the old women that ever were or will be, from before the flood to the final dissolution of this our globe."

One cannot wonder that these letters passed from hand to hand amongst her personal friends and became talked of beyond that intimate circle, or that she should have been urged to publish them by Burke, Lord Chatham, Garrick, Mr. Stillingfleet, Lord Kames, Elizabeth Carter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Dr. Beattie.

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Politics and public events are sometimes, but briefly, noticed in them. The Jacobite rising in 1745 cast a gloom over her winter visit to London.

"I have not heard of any assemblies since I came to town," she writes, "and, indeed, I think people frighten each other so much when they meet that there is little pleasure arising from society. I wish we had our peace, our whist, and our vanities as last year—that by the word *drum* we understood a polite assembly, and by a rout an engagement of hoop-petticoats."

In 1746 Mrs. Robinson died :—

"Concluding, with an heroic constancy," writes her daughter, "the most virtuous life. From her prosperity she drew arguments of resignation and patience, and expressed the greatest thankfulness that Providence had lent her so many blessings, without repining that they were to be taken away. She had spent her life in doing those just and right things that bring peace at the last, and left the world with the greatest innocence of soul and integrity of heart I ever knew."

A loss still less anticipated was that of her second brother, a young man of great talent, who died from a cold caught while pleading before the House of Commons. But, amidst all her sorrows, she "thanked Heaven that she still possessed so kind a friend as Mr. Montagu," and her letters to him, when her doctors sent her again to Tunbridge Wells, are very pretty :—

"I wish I could procure wings to bring me to you on the terrace at Sandleford," she writes, "where I had passed so

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many happy hours in the conversation of the best of companions and the kindest and dearest of friends, and I hope you will there recollect one who followed your steps as constantly as your shadow. I am still following them, for there are few moments in which my thoughts are not employed on you, and ever in the tenderest and most faithful manner. . . . To your prayer that we may not again be so long separated I can with much zealous fervour say *amen*."

Mrs. Montagu was present in 1751 at the "subscription masquerade," at which Miss Chudleigh * made her notorious appearance as Iphigenia, when, she says, "The Maids of Honour (not of maids the strictest) were so offended they would not speak to her." Mr. Montagu so greatly admired his wife's appearance as

"the Queen Mother, in a white satin dress with fine new point for tuckers, kerchief and ruffles, pearl necklace and earrings, pearls and diamonds on my head, and my hair curled after the Vandyke picture . . . that he made me lay by my dress to be painted in, when I see Mr. Hoare again."

One of the many famous men who ranked among Mrs. Montagu's admirers was Mr. Pitt, afterwards first Earl of Chatham.

In 1753 he was drinking the waters at Tunbridge Wells, in a state of health which occasioned much anxiety to his friends. Mrs. Montagu's

* The *soi-disant* Duchess of Kingston.

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cousin, Gilbert West,* who was also staying at Tunbridge Wells, wrote to her :—

"Mr. Pitt expressed a due sense of your goodness in inquiring so particularly after him, and that you may know how high you stand in his opinion, I must inform you that in a conversation with Molly, he pronounced you *the most perfect woman* he ever met with."

Next year the great statesman gave his friends another topic :—

"Since the days that Cupid set Hercules to the distaff," writes Mrs. Montagu to Gilbert West, "he has not had a nobler conquest than over the elevated soul of Mr. Pitt. I congratulate you on the affinity,† and hope he will be happy. I believe Lady Hester Grenville is very good-humoured, which is the principal article in the happiness of the marriage state."

It was probably from her own experience that she continued :—

"These sober matches made on reflection are often happier than those made by sudden and violent passion, and I hope this will prove of that kind ; and there is an authority in the character of Mr. Pitt that will secure him the deference and obedience of his wife ; proud of him abroad, she will be humble to him at home."

Remembering what the son for whom such bright hopes are expressed became in after years,

* Well known as a scholar and versifier, and translator of "Pindar." Johnson wrote his life, and characterized him as "one of the few poets to whom the grave might be without its terrors."

† Mr. West was related to the Grenville family, and Lady Hester was married to Mr. Pitt at Wickham, Mr. West's country seat.

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and the weird legends that grew round his death-bed, the following passage from one of "the good Lord Lyttelton's" letters to Mrs. Montagu is touching:—

"My son is much obliged to you for all your goodness to him; yet upon this occasion my wishes for him are much higher than yours. I hope and expect, from the talents he seems to be endowed with by Nature, and from his mother's blood which runs in his veins, that he will far outgo his father in the career of virtue and honour. An early acquaintance and intimacy with the Madonna * will be a further advantage, if she will be so good as to favour him with it, which will form his mind to all that is worthy and noble, and make him amends for the loss of a mother whose instructions she alone can ever supply."

Lord Lyttelton's letters to her are always affectionate and often playful:—

"I rejoice to hear that your eyes are grown strong again," he writes, "but remember that they are to be used with some caution, like a limb newly set. I will allow you to kill with them as much as you please (for *that* they can do without any effort), but not to read as much as you please, no, nor even to write. . . . Adieu, sweet Madonna. Your boy"—his son Thomas—"and the governor are both perfectly well, and so is your friend Mrs. Hood, allowing for the absence of her dear,† which takes from her the relish of health. Why are

* A name given to Mrs. Montagu by Mr. West and other friends.

† Her husband the Admiral, afterwards Viscount Hood. They were a most devoted couple. "Depend upon it," Mrs. Montagu writes to Lord Lyttelton, "Mrs. Hood had rather meet Mr. Hood in the worst inn's worst room, and dine with him on eggs and bacon, than sit in your lordship's saloon at an epicurean feast."

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dears ever absent? It is a wrong thing in the course of this world, and will be set right in paradise."

Mrs. Montagu was always anxious to form friendships with women as cultivated as herself, and quite clear-sighted enough to discern what feeling sometimes held them back. To Elizabeth Carter, the translator of Epictetus,* she wrote:—

"I can perfectly understand why you were afraid of me last year, and I will tell you, for you won't tell me—perhaps you have not told yourself; you had heard I set up for a wit, and people of real merit and sense hate to converse with witlings. . . . I am happy you have found out I am not to be feared. I am afraid I must improve myself much before you will find I am to be loved."

That Miss Carter did make this discovery we see in her letters, one of which gives a glimpse of Mrs. Montagu at home:—

"Our friend, you know, has talents which must distinguish her in the largest circles, but there it is impossible for one fully to discover either the beauties of her character or the extent and variety of her understanding, which always improves on a more accurate examination and a nearer view. The charm is inexpressibly heightened when it is complicated with the affections of the heart."

In one of Mrs. Montagu's letters to the same

* "Miss Carter was much, and, we believe, deservedly, admired for the soundness of her acquirements. We were startled at reading the other day that, in her youth, she had not only the wisdom of a Pallas but the look of a Hebe. Healthy, no doubt, she was, and possessed of a fine constitution. She was probably also handsome. But Hebe and a hook nose are in our minds impossible associations." —*Leigh Hunt*; "Men, Women, and Books," p. 274.

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correspondent * she says that she regards the limitations to our power of expressing feeling, as an intimation of immortality:—

"How much I felt your kind disposition to turn back when you were on the stairs I cannot express to you in words; there started a tear on reading that paragraph which declared the sentiment better. Words serve well for common occasions, but there are so many on which they cannot explain the movements of the heart and the delicate feelings of the soul that in a state of natural religion only it would have helped to convince me of our being destined to exist in another life, when we should not use so inadequate an interpreter of our thoughts as language is. Thought is of the soul, language belongs to body; we shall leave it in the grave with our other rags of mortality."

A letter to her sister Sarah gives the first indication of how strongly she felt on a subject which afterwards made her famous:—

"Mr. Voltaire has given us a Chinese tragedy. . . . I read it without any concern. When I compare this indifference with the interest, the admiration, the surprise with which I read what the saucy Frenchman calls the *farces monstreuses* of Shakespeare, I could burn him and his tragedy! Foolish coxcomb! Rules can no more make a poet than receipts a cook. There must be taste, there must be skill. Oh! that we were as sure our fleets and armies could drive the French out of America as that our poets and tragedians can drive them out of Parnassus!"

The unhappy marriage of this clever and sympathetic sister, to whom Mrs. Montagu was

* "When the learned praise the writer," she says, "I speak of the *friend*."

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so tenderly attached, was a great sorrow to her family. Her husband, George Lewis Scott,* had been by Bolingbroke's recommendation made sub-preceptor to the Prince of Wales, and was therefore, so far as position went, no unfit match for the younger Miss Robinson. A separation, however, speedily followed the marriage. Her nephew gives no account of this unfortunate affair, but Mrs. Delany told her sister Mrs. Dewes, that Mrs. Scott had been "rescued," by Mrs. Montagu and her other friends, "from the hands of a very bad man." Appreciating the happiness of her own home as she did, Mrs. Montagu must have doubly regretted the blight on her sister's life.

In 1760 appeared Lord Lyttelton's "Dialogues of the Dead," to which Mrs. Montagu contributed three. Dr. Doran considers them "creditable to her, and, if not ringing with wit, full of good sense and fine satire. They could only have come from one who had not merely read much, but thought more." She herself said:—

"The Dialogues—I mean the three worst—have had a more favourable reception than I expected. . . . 'Mrs. Modish' is a great favourite with the town, but some of the ladies have tossed up their heads and said it was abominably satirical. . . . I have long been sorry to see the best

* Named after George I., in whose Court at Hanover his father held some office.

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of our sex running continually after public spectacles and diversions, to the ruin of their health and understandings and neglect of all domestic duties. But I own the late instance of their going to hear Lord Ferrers's sentence particularly provoked me. The ladies crowded to the House of Lords to see a wretch brought, loaded with crime and shame, to the Bar to hear sentence of a cruel and ignominious death. . . . There was in this case everything that could disgrace human nature and civil distinctions. But it was a sight, and, in spite of all pretences to tenderness and delicacy, they went, adorned with jewels and laughing and gay, to see their fellow creature in the most horrid situation, making a sad end of this life and in fearful expectation of the commencement of another."

The selection from Mrs. Montagu's letters published by her nephew ends abruptly in 1761. Fortunately Mr. Richard Bentley purchased at a sale of autographs her subsequent correspondence with her sister-in-law, Mrs. William Robinson, and some other friends; these letters supplied Dr. Doran with most of the material for his charming "Lady of the Last Century," and thus we are enabled to follow her life to its close.

We are apt to imagine that political enthusiasm amongst the masses, like the great extension of the suffrage, is a comparatively modern development. But Mrs. Scott gives one of her brothers an amusing picture of the height to which it rose in 1762.

"The lowest artificer thinks now of nothing but the

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constitution of the government. The English always seemed born politicians, but were never so universally mad on the subject as at present. If you order a mason to build an oven, he immediately enquires about the progress of the peace, and descants on the preliminaries. A carpenter, instead of putting up a shelf to a cupboard, talks of the Princess Dowager and of secretaries of state. Neglected lie the trowel and chisel; the mortar dries and the glue hardens, while the persons who should use them are busied with dissertations on the government." *

A prolonged tour through Scotland in 1766 added "Dr. Robertson, Dr. Blair, Lord Kames, Dr. Gregory, and divers ingenious and agreeable persons" to the number of her friends. Gray had visited Edinburgh shortly before her, and she was told that his manner in society was cold and reserved, on which she remarks, with the bright audacity of her girlhood:—

"I shall be very glad to see Mr. Gray whenever he will do me the favour. I think he is the first poet of the age; but if he comes to my fireside I will teach him not only to speak prose, but to talk nonsense if the occasion be. The great duty of conversation is to follow suit, as you do at whist. . . . I would not have a poet always sit on the proud summit of the forked hill."

1769 saw the publication of Mrs. Montagu's "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare," a reply to Voltaire, which attracted universal attention at the time, though opinions

* "A Lady of the Last Century," by Dr. Doran, F.S.A. Richard Bentley & Son, 1873. Page 126.

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on its merits were hotly divided. The Dowager Countess Gower dryly observed to Mrs. Delany: "Mrs. Montagu has commenced author, in vindication of Shakespeare, who wants none." So competent a critic as Dr. Doran declares that the essay "may still be read with pleasure; it is marked by good taste, by evidences of deep thought, by flashes of wit, and by the grasp she has, firmly and gracefully, on her subject. . . . No reader will hesitate to praise the earnestness and delicacy with which this lady of the last century has executed her noble task." Twenty years after its appearance Cowper wrote to Lady Hesketh:—

"I no longer wonder that Mrs. Montagu stands at the head of all that is called learned, and that every critic veils his bonnet to her superior judgment. . . . The learning, the good sense, the sound judgment and the wit displayed in it fully justify, not only my compliment, but all compliments that have been already paid to her talents, or shall be paid hereafter."

Dr. Johnson, on the other hand, did not admire it at all. Boswell remarked that it did her honour; and Johnson replied:—

"Yes, sir, it does *her* honour, but it would do nobody else honour. I have, indeed, not read it all. But when I take up the end of a web and find it pack-thread, I do not expect by looking further to find embroidery. Sir, I will venture to say there is not one sentence of true criticism in her book." *Garrick.*—"But, sir, surely it shows how much Voltaire has

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mistaken Shakespeare, which nobody else has done." *Johnson.*—"Sir, nobody else has thought it worth while. You may as well praise a schoolmaster for whipping a boy who had construed ill."

Croker, however, for once on the side of mercy, ranks himself as one of her admirers against the doctor, and says the essay is "clearly and elegantly expressed, and has done effectually what it professed to do."

Yet Dr. Johnson was at one time her fervent admirer, and wrote to her in a courtier-like strain:—

"To have you detained among us by sickness is to enjoy your presence at too dear a rate. . . . I wish you may be so well as to be able to leave us, and so kind as not to be willing. . . . All that the esteem and reverence of mankind can give you are already yours; and the little I can add to the voice of nations will not much exalt. Of that little, however, you are, I hope, very certain."

She deserved his esteem, for among her many generous and charitable acts she settled a small pension on his blind friend Mrs. Williams. He also paid a tribute, in his most ponderous style, to her conversational powers:—

"Mrs. Montagu, sir, does not make a trade of her wit. But Mrs. Montagu is a most extraordinary woman. . . . She exerts more *mind* in conversation than any person I ever met with. Sir, she displays such powers of ratiocination, such radiations of intellectual eminence, as are amazing."

Mrs. Montagu could be very severe on any form of meanness, ostentation, or hypocrisy which

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fell under her notice. In 1771 she wrote to her sister-in-law :—

"The Duke of Bedford died of a fit of asthma. He departed singing the 104th Psalm. This shows he had some piety, but I think his Grace sang out of tune; so I am not an admirer of his singing. I like a psalm-singing cobbler in death as well as in life. A poor man who has maintained a wife and children by his labour, has observed the Sabbath, kept the Ten Commandments, and lived kindly with his neighbours, may sing his own requiem with a cheerful and comfortable assurance. Of him to whom little is given, little shall be required. But the debtor and creditor of a long account is not so easily settled. Wealth, titles, power give a great influence in society. . . . Has the commonwealth been served equal to its great demands on a Duke of Bedford?"

Mrs. Montagu took a hearty share in all the pursuits and interests of her husband. We find her writing from Denton Castle, Northumberland :—"Business has taken up much of my time; and as we had farms to let against next May Day, and I was willing to see the new colliery begin to trade to London before I left the country, I had the prudence to get the better of my taste for society." And again: "We have had the finest weather I ever saw for any long continuance. As a farmer I have some fault to find with it. Our wheat and barley and turnips have all suffered by drought. We had not any reason to complain of our hay, but the grass is very much burnt."

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One of Mrs. Montagu's *protégés* she describes as "a philosopher,"—

"very skilful in botany, who came here to be my guide about the hills in search of plants. I call him a philosopher, not on account of his knowledge, which I think seldom produces that kind of creature, nor on account of his voluntary poverty, which is often the effect of spleen, but on account of a certain simplicity and benevolence of temper which is the choicest gift of Heaven. He is above seventy years old, and has all the vigour and cheerfulness of a young man. He lives in a cottage entirely by himself, dresses his meat, when he eats any, which is but seldom, never sleeps above four hours in the twenty-four, never lies on a bed in the usual form, but makes use of herbs of various kinds, with only two blankets, for that purpose. He will stand up to the middle in water in March, fishing for hours together; and will pass the day without eating or drinking, without being hungry or dry, by the help of a pebble in his mouth. His time is generally spent prescribing to the lower sort of farmers and poor; from the latter he takes neither fee nor reward, and puts the former to no expense for drugs, for he uses none but what grow in the fields or his garden. . . . I must tell you, to finish his character, that this same philosopher has seen the world, and once kept race horses and running footmen, though he never had a fortune for such expenses. However, he was worth something, and lost the remains of his fortune in superintending mines for a nobleman who left him in the lurch. He tells me he has not the least desire to be owner of a larger sum than may serve to keep him in his last illness and to bury him."

Her home duties were varied by very agreeable visits; one of these was to Lord and Lady Temple at Stowe, where the "superb gardens" were her



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great attraction. Another was to Burke, at Beaconsfield :—

"Mr. Burke is an industrious farmer, a polite husband, a kind master, a charitable neighbour, and a most excellent companion. The demons of ambition and party who hover about Westminster do not extend their influences as far as the villa. I know not why it is, but these busy spirits seem more tranquil and pleased in their days of retreat, than the honest dull justice of the quorum who never raised his voice in public to fill the trumpet of fame. . . . I have always found that nothing is so gentle as the chief out of war, nor so serene and simple as the statesman out of place."

"The salt of life is contrast," is the key to Mrs. Montagu's puzzle.

It seems curious to read, more than a hundred years ago, the same excuse for scanty and infrequent letters, and the same complaint of newspaper personalities, so common in our own day :—

"In early life I was a most punctual correspondent, but of late I have been as much too remiss as I was formerly too diligent in writing letters. . . . When newspapers only told weddings, births, and burials, a letter from London bore some value. But now that the public papers not only tell when men are born and die, but every folly they contrive to insert between those periods, the literary correspondent has nothing left. Lies and dulness used to be valued in manuscript, but printing has assumed a right over the lies of the day and the amusement of the hour. On stamped paper and by authority are published what Lady B. L. says of a fat alderman, and how Miss Biddy Bellair was dressed at the last masquerade."

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Mrs. Delany tells her sister, Mrs. Port of Ilam, in 1774, how much she enjoyed a quiet dinner at which she assembled a few of her favourite friends :—

"It was an agreeable day. The Bishop of Lichfield's sensible, cheerful conversation, with great politeness, was an excellent contrast to Mr. Mason's shyness, and Mrs. Montagu's sprightly and inoffensive humour unfolded the poet's reserve, and they played an excellent trio till nine, when a rap at the door dispersed my company."

Less to Mrs. Delany's taste was an assembly at Mrs. Montagu's own house, to which the Duchess of Portland insisted on carrying her :—

"I was dazzled with the brillancy of her assembly. It was a moderate one, they said, but infinitely too numerous for my senses. My eyesight grew dimmer, my ears more dummy, my tongue faltered, my heart palpitated, and a few moments convinced me that the fine world was no longer a place for me, though I met with encouragement eno' from beaux and belles who gathered about me, like so many gay birds about an owl ; but my wisdom prevailed for once over my vanity. I kept very near the door (not advancing so far as the carpet), and whispered the Duchess that I was going home, which I did as soon as the door opened for more company. Her Grace soon followed me, and by a comfortable quiet hour of her all-healing conversation, and a dish of good tea, I was refreshed, and had full amends for all my past toils."

Mr. Montagu's health had been failing for years, but his last illness in May, 1775, was peculiarly painful.

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"Poor Mrs. Montagu," writes Mrs. Chapone to Mrs. Delany, "is in a most distressful situation. Mr. Montagu is in the last stage, but instead of sinking easily, as might have been expected from so long and gradual a decline, he suffers a great struggle, and has a fever attended with deliriums, which are most dreadfully affecting to Mrs. Montagu. If this sad scene should continue, I tremble for the effects of it on her tender frame." *

It did not long continue. Eight days afterwards Mr. Montagu died—a mathematician to the last, demanding proof when his poor wife tried to inspire him with the faith which had replaced her own brief period of fashionable scepticism. She asked Dr. Beattie to attempt her husband's conversion, but he wrote to Dr. Laing that Mr. Montagu "set too much value on mathematical evidence, and piqued himself too much on his knowledge in that science."

He left everything to his widow, "only charging the estate," says Mrs. Delany, "with a legacy of £3000. If her heart proves as good as her head she may do abundance of good." †

She certainly did, not only in acts of benevolence, but in the practical good sense and kindliness with which she managed her new possessions. After a brief interval of retirement she set out for her

* "Autobiography and Correspondence of Mrs. Delany," 2nd series, vol. ii. p. 126.

† Walpole told Mason she had £7000 a year.

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northern estates, needing a bracing air after the long anxiety and confinement which had seriously injured her health and spirits. "As Mr. Montagu had always been a very good landlord," she wrote to her sister-in-law, "I thought it right to show the good people they would have a kind landlady, and therefore I would not pass by without taking notice of them." Accordingly she visited her farms in person, and invited her tenants to a banquet at the chief inn of the neighbourhood. "Unfortunately there was not a room large enough to contain all my good friends, so the women and the young lasses dined with me, and the men with the steward."

She was pleased with the condition of her Yorkshire property.

"No complaint on the part of the tenant of poverty, or on that of the landlord of arrears. The land is in good condition, and by having been long settled they have acquired an affection for the farm they are placed upon, and will always give it as good a rent as it deserves; and they know the nature of the undertaking too well to give more. It is folly to let farms too cheap; and it is both wickedness and folly to let them too dear."

The colliers came in for a share of her attention:—

"Denton," she says, "has mightily the air of an ant-hill—a vast many black animals for ever busy. . . . I used to give my colliery people a feast when I came hither, but as the good souls (men and women) are very apt to get drunk, and

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when drunk very joyful, and sing, and dance, and holloa, and whoop, I dare not on this occasion trust their discretion to behave with proper gravity."

So she contented herself with sending large joints of meat to all the heads of families, and giving the boys and girls a supper of boiled beef and rice pudding. Clothes, too, she gave them, and proposed establishing a school at which the girls might learn sewing, spinning, and knitting :—

"I have not been one moment ill since I set out on my journey," she writes. "I walk about my farms and down to my colliery like a country gentlewoman of the last century. . . . I cannot reconcile myself to seeing my fellow-creatures descend into the dark regions of the earth, though, to my great comfort, I hear them singing in the pits."

In the following summer Mrs. Montagu went to Paris. Walpole, writing to Mason, relates an incident in this visit which shows her ready wit. Voltaire, he says, sent to the French Academy

"an invective against Shakespeare that bears all the marks of passionate dotage. Mrs. Montagu happened to be present when it was read. Suard, one of their writers, said to her, 'Je crois, Madame, que vous êtes un peu fache de ce que vous venez d'entendre ?' She replied, 'Moi, Monsieur ? Point du tout ! Je ne suis pas amie de Monsieur Voltaire !" *

Mrs. Scott, like her sister, was often at Bath, and

* "Letters of Horace Walpole," edited by Peter Cunningham. Bentley & Son, 1891. Vol. vi. p. 396.

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there, in 1775–6, she noticed a little lame boy, between four and five years old:—

"When he had bathed in the morning, got through a reading-lesson at an old dame's near his lodging on the Parade, and had a drive over the downs with the author of 'Douglas' and Mrs. Home," says Dr. Doran, "the boy was sometimes to be seen in the boxes of the old theatre. On one such occasion, witnessing *As You Like It*, his interest was so great that in the middle of the wrestling scene in the first act, he called out—'Ain't they brothers?' The boy, when he had become a man, said in his autobiography, 'A few weeks' residence at home convinced me, who had till then been an only child in the house of my grandfather, that a quarrel between brothers was a very natural event.' This boy's name was Walter Scott." *

An illness, very similar to that so unpleasantly familiar under the same name of late years, is often referred to in Mrs. Montagu's letters:—

"I imagine," she says, "my fever at Canterbury was the influenza, which has lately raged so much. It leaves people very weak and much affects the nerves. Some have lost their speech for a few days, others their hearing. My Northumberland steward and my brother, who left London when I did, were both taken ill on the road. . . . I believe my principal illness was owing to contagion in the air. My servants have all been sick."

Here is a mode of influencing the "free and independent" populace more practical than the visionary "three acres and a cow."

"Lady Strathmore's conduct at Newcastle, in the election,

* "A Lady of the Last Century," pp. 203–4.

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is, perhaps, not generally known. She sits all day in the window at a public-house, from whence she lets fall some jewels or trinkets, which voters pick up, and then she gives them money for restoring them—a new way of offering bribes."

The record of advancing years is largely tinged with inevitable sorrow. One of the dearest of Mrs. Montagu's seven brothers died in 1777, and in the following January she writes:—

"My spirits felt a great damp at first returning to London, where I used to enjoy the friendly converse of my dear departed brother. Death, disasters, and incidents have reduced a large fireside to a small circle. A few years, indeed, showed me that the flattering hopes one entertained in the nursery, of living in social gaiety and freedom with those nearly allied in blood, were mere pleasing delusions. If other things do not sever these natural connections, the fatal scissors cut their thread."

When dipping into old diaries and letters, it is wonderful how often we find that what we consider our own newest and most advanced crazes were anticipated in some degree by our remote ancestresses. Fencing is one of the latest accomplishments imparted to girls, but in 1778 Mrs. Montagu writes:—

"Minuet dancing is just now out of fashion, and, by the military air and dress of many of the ladies, I should not be surprised if backsword and cudgel-playing should take its place. I think our encampments excellent for making men less effeminate; but if they make our women more masculine,

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the male and female character, which should ever be kept distinct, will now be less so than they have been!"

The "Great Cham of Literature," one cannot but suspect, enjoyed the little rivalries and jealousies, the sparrings and huffs of the Muses and Graces, by whom he was adoringly surrounded. He certainly took a malicious delight in "setting them on." Here is a case in point. One evening at Streatham, in 1778, Dr. Johnson complained that he "could not make little Burney prattle." "To-morrow, sir," said Mrs. Thrale, consolingly, "Mrs. Montagu dines here, and then you will have talk enough."

"Dr. Johnson began to see-saw," continues Miss Burney, "with a countenance strongly expressive of inward fun. And after enjoying it some time in silence, he suddenly and with great animation turned to me, and said: 'Down with her, Burney, down with her! Spare her not! Attack her, fight her, and down with her at once! You are a rising wit, and she is at the top; and when I was beginning the world, and was nothing and nobody, the joy of my life was to fire at all the established wits; and then everybody loved to halloo me on. But there is no game now; everybody would be glad to see me conquered. But when I was new, to vanquish the great ones was all the delight of my poor, dear little soul! So at her, Burney! At her, and down with her!'"

In spite of this amiable adjuration, Miss Burney adds:—

"Mrs. Montagu is in very great estimation here, even

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with Dr. Johnson himself, when others do not praise her improperly. Mrs. Thrale ranks her as the first of women in the literary way. Miss Gregory, daughter of the Gregory who wrote the 'Legacy of Advice,' lives with Mrs. Montagu, and was invited to accompany her. 'Mark, now,' said Dr. Johnson, 'if I contradict her to-morrow. I am determined, let her say what she will, that I will not contradict her.' 'Why, to be sure, sir,' said Mrs. Thrale, 'you did put her a little out of countenance last time she came. You were neither rough, nor cruel, nor ill-natured. But still, when a lady changes colour, we imagine her feelings are not quite composed."

On this gentle reminder Dr. Johnson, as Mrs. Thrale probably intended that he should, recalled his virtuous resolution.

"'Why, madame, I won't answer that I shan't contradict her again, if she provokes me as she did then. But a less provocation I will withstand. I believe I am not high in her good graces already.* And I begin to tremble for my admission into her new house.' 'Oh, I warrant you,' answered Mrs. Thrale, 'she fears you, indeed. But that you know is nothing uncommon. And dearly I love to hear your disquisitions. For certainly she is the first woman for literary knowledge in England; and if in England, I hope I may say in the world.' *Dr. J.*—'I believe you may, madame. She diffuses more knowledge in her conversation than any woman I know, or, indeed, almost any man.'†

* Mrs. Montagu was offended by Johnson's neither accepting nor acknowledging an invitation to one of her Hill Street Assemblies—a distinction eagerly sought for and highly valued by most of his literary contemporaries.

† Johnson did not, however, admit her claim to deep scholarship. "She does not know Greek, and, I fancy, knows little Latin," he assured Boswell. "She is willing you should think she knows them. But she does not say she does." On the contrary, she

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*Mrs. T.*—'I declare I know no man equal to her, take away yourself and Burke, in that art. And you, who love magnificence, won't quarrel with her, as everybody else does, for her love of finery.' *Dr. J.*—'No, I shall not quarrel with her upon that topic. . . . Come, Burney—shall you and I study our parts against Mrs. Montagu comes?'"

Naturally the meeting so discussed in anticipation is very fully detailed in the "Diary."

"Mrs. Montagu is middle-sized, very thin, and looks infirm. She has a sensible and penetrating countenance, and the air and manner of a woman accustomed to being distinguished, and of great parts. Dr. Johnson, who agrees in this, told us that his acquaintance Mrs. Hervey says she can remember Mrs. Montagu *trying* for this same air and manner. Mr. Crisp says the same. However, nobody can now impartially see her and not confess that she has extremely well succeeded. My expectations, which were compounded of the praise of Mrs. Thrale and the abuse of Mr. Crisp, were most exactly answered, for I thought her in a medium way."

Then Mrs. Thrale began to discuss "Evelina," and to announce the author, on which "clap of

incessantly deprecated receiving credit for scholarship she did not possess. "I thank you," she writes to Dr. Monsey, "for all the wit and the wisdom, and the Latin and Greek in your letter. For though I have no skill in these matters, it looks as if you thought I had, and the presumption does me much honour." But Johnson stoutly defended her when Boswell accused her of being generous "from vanity." "I have seen no beings," said the Doctor, "who do as much good from benevolence as she does, from whatever motive. If there are such under the earth or in the clouds, I wish they would come up or come down. What Soame Jenyns says on this subject is not to be minded. He is a wit."—Boswell's "Life of Johnson," edited by Alexander Napier, M.A. Bell & Sons, edit. 1884. Vol. iii. pp. 92, 259.

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thunder" the modest Fanny, finding "handkerchiefing her face" insufficient, "took to her heels and ran out of the room, and did not re-appear until dinner-time." Presumably, Fanny feared that Mrs. Montagu would prostrate herself before her at the first opportunity, for she gravely records: "Mrs. Montagu behaved to me just as I could have wished, since she spoke to me very little, but spoke that little with the utmost politeness." Before her departure Mrs. Montagu invited all the company present to her house-warming on the following Easter Day; on which Dr. Johnson—

"clapped his hand on my shoulder and called out aloud: 'Little Burney, you and I will go together!' 'Yes, surely,' cried Mrs. Montagu; 'I shall hope for the pleasure of seeing "Evelina!"' '"Evelina?"' repeated he; 'has Mrs. Montagu then found out "Evelina"?' 'Yes, and I am proud of it. I am proud that a work so commended should be a woman's.' . . . She repeated her invitation as she left the room. So now that I am invited to Mrs. Montagu's I think the measure of my glory full!"*

In 1781 Dr. Johnson's "Life of Lyttelton" occasioned a coolness between him and Mrs. Montagu. He sent it to her in manuscript, and she objected to the tone of several passages which she thought depreciated her old and valued friend;

* "Diary, etc., of Madame D'Arblay." Edit. 1891. Vol. i. pp. 65–74.

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but he sent the work to press without modifying a syllable, and she never treated him with cordiality again; and although he accepted an invitation to dine at her house, she did not talk to him. Johnson turned to his neighbour, General Paoli, and remarked, "You see, sir, I am no longer the man for Mrs. Montagu." He also said: "Mrs. Montagu has dropped me. Now, sir, there are people whom one should like very well to drop, but would not choose to be dropped by."

Horace Walpole took a malicious delight in this division in the literary camp:—

"At a blue stocking meeting held by Lady Lucan," he writes to Mann, "Mrs. Montagu and Johnson kept at different ends of the chamber, and set up altar against altar there. She told me, as a mark of her high displeasure, that she would not ask him to dinner again. I took her aside and fomented the quarrel, and wished I could have made Dagon and Ashtaroth scold in Coptic."

When writing of his own first introduction to literary society, Wraxall says:—

"At the time of which I speak, the *gens de lettres*, or blue stockings, as they were commonly denominated, formed a very numerous, powerful, compact phalanx in the midst of London. . . . Mrs. Montagu was then the Mme. du Deffaud of the English capital, and her house constituted the central point of union for all those persons who already were known, or who emulated to become known by their talents and productions. Her supremacy was indeed established on more solid foundations than those of intellect, and rested on more

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tangible materials than any with which Shakespeare himself could furnish her. She had not as yet begun to construct the splendid mansion in which she afterwards resided in Portman Square,* but lived in an elegant house in Hill Street, which she was accustomed to open to a large company of both sexes, whom she frequently entertained at dinner. A service of plate, and a table plentifully covered, disposed her guests to admire the splendour of her fortune, not less than the lustre of her talents. She had found the same results flowing from the same causes during the visit she made to Paris after the peace of 1763, when she displayed to the astonished literati of that metropolis the extent of her pecuniary as well as of her mental resources. As this topic formed one of the subjects most gratifying to her, she was easily induced to launch out on it with much complacency. . . . Mrs. Montagu, in 1776, verged towards her sixtieth year. But her person, which was thin, spare, and in good preservation, gave her an appearance of less antiquity. From the infirmities often attendant on advanced life, she seemed almost wholly exempt. All the lines of her countenance bespoke intelligence, and her eyes, like the cast of her features, had in them something satirical and severe, rather amiable or inviting."

This may possibly have been correct at the period of which Wraxall writes. But if any faith is to be placed in the well-known engraving from Zincke's miniature, representing her at the age of twenty-four, in the fancy dress she wore as Anne Boleyn, not only was her beauty unquestionable, but her expression that of the most candid and

* Her nephew and heir told an acquaintance that she built this house, and the one at Sandilands, Berks, out of the savings of an income of £6000 per annum. [*H. B. Wheatley*, Ed. Wraxall.]

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attractive sweetness. And the expression of a face rarely changes utterly, however cruel time may be to the features.

"She possessed great natural cheerfulness and a flow of animal spirits, loved to talk, and talked well on almost every subject, led the conversation, and was qualified to preside in her circle; but her manner was more dictatorial and sententious than conciliating or diffident. There was nothing feminine about her. And though her opinions were usually just, as well as delivered in language suited to give them force, yet the organ which conveyed them was not soft or harmonious."

Not content with attacking Mrs. Montagu's looks and voice, this merciless critic goes on to find fault with her attire, which he calls "destitute of taste," although, he says, she studied it more "than would seem to have become a woman professing a philosophic mind."

"Even when approaching fourscore, the female weakness still accompanied her; nor could she relinquish her diamond necklace and bows, which formed on evenings the perpetual ornament of her emaciated person.* I used to think that these glittering appendages of opulence sometimes helped to dazzle the disputants whom her arguments might not always convince. Notwithstanding the defects that I have enumerated, she possessed a masculine understanding, en-

* As a girl she professed a fine contempt for all such adornments, probably well aware that she could easily dispense with them. "Surely," she wrote, "of all vanities, that of jewels is the most ridiculous. They do not even tend to the order of dress, beauty, and cleanliness. For a woman is not a jot the handsomer or cleaner for them."

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lightened, cultivated, and expanded by the acquaintance of men as well as of books. Many of the most illustrious persons in rank, no less than in ability, under the reigns of George II. and III., had been her correspondents, friends, and admirers. . . . She was constantly surrounded by all that was distinguished for attainments or talents, male or female, English or foreign. And it would be ungrateful in me not to acknowledge the gratification derived from intercourse with such a society." *

The "splendid mansion in Portman Square," referred to by Wraxall, was completed in 1782:

"As I got everything accomplished before I left London, I had the satisfaction of getting a receipt in full of all demands from the various artificers. I will own my taste is unfashionable, but there is to me a wonderful charm in those words, *in full of all demands*. My house never appeared to me so noble, so splendid, so pleasant, so convenient as when I had paid off every shilling of debt it had incurred. The worst of haunted houses are those haunted by duns."

Walpole wrote to Mason in February:—

"I dined on Monday with the Harcourts in Mrs. Montagu's new palace, and was much surprised. Instead of vagaries, it is a noble simple edifice. When I came home, I recollected that, though I had thought it so magnificent a house, there was not a morsel of gilding. It is grand, not tawdry, nor larded and embroidered with shreds, and remnants, and clinquant, like all the harlequinades of Adam, which never let the eye repose a moment." †

She herself said of it:—

"I receive many compliments upon its elegance and

* "Memoirs of Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall." Bickers & Son, 1884. Vol. i. pp. 99–103.

† "Letters of Horace Walpole." Edit. 1891. Vol. viii. p. 156.

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magnificence, but what most recommends it to me is its convenience and cheerfulness. A good house is a great comfort in old age, and among the few felicities that money can obtain."

The London "palace" enabled Mrs. Montagu to hold larger and more brilliant assemblies than ever. They were turned into ridicule by Cumberland (perhaps he was not amongst those invited?) under the title of "The Feast of Reason," contributed to the *Observer*. He calls Mrs. Montagu "Vanessa," and represents her as seated, like the Athenian Minerva, receiving the homage of a mingled crowd of worshippers; or passing from group to group, prompting mathematicians to quote Pindar, persuading lawyers to write novels, or urging men of business to manufacture rhymes as well as buttons. The whole essay, according to Dr. Doran, is a curious mixture of praise and blame—so blended that neither could have been of much weight. The paper excited some curiosity at Court, however, according to Fanny Burney, who herself figured in it in complimentary terms:

"About this time," she writes, "the Queen one day, taking up a book, said, 'Now don't answer what I am going to ask if you have any objection to it. This book, I am told, contains the character of Mrs. Montagu?' It was the *Observer*. I could not deny it. And she opened at the account of *Vanessa*, and read it out to me, stopping upon every new name for a key. I could give it to but very few—



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Mrs. Wright the wax modeller, Dr. Johnson, and I forget what others. . . . How infinitely severe a criticism is this *Vanessa* upon Mrs. Montagu! Do you remember hearing Mr. Cambridge read it at Twickenham? I think it a very injurious attack in Mr. Cumberland; for whatever may be Mrs. Montagu's foibles, she is free, I believe, from all vice, and as a member of society she is magnificently useful. This, and much more to this purpose, I instantly said to her Majesty, who was very ready to hear me, and to concur in thinking such usage very cruel."*

One of the greatest curiosities in her new home was the "feather room," with hangings made by herself from the plumage of peacock, pheasant, swan, and many a less distinguished bird. Cowper sang of this apartment that—

> "The birds put off their every hue
> To dress a room for Montagu;"

in which he says she assembles genius, wit, philosophy, learning, and fancy:

> "All these to Montagu repair,
> Ambitious of a shelter there.
> She thus maintains divided sway
> With yon bright regent of the day.
> The plume and poet both, we know,
> Their lustre to his influence owe;
> And she the works of Phœbus aiding,
> Both poet saves, and plume, from fading."

In Mrs. Montagu's radiant youth Dr. Young, on one of their meetings at Tunbridge Wells,

* "Diary and Letters of Mme. D'Arblay." As edited by her niece, Charlotte Barrett. Bell & Sons, edit. 1891. Vol. ii. p. 208.

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had anticipated Cowper's comparison, and much amused the object of his compliment by calling the sun "her only rival."

In curious and interesting contrast to the stately gatherings laughed at in the *Observer*, was an entertainment annually given by Mrs. Montagu to the London chimney-sweeps on May Day. The poor children who at that period climbed the chimneys must have been especially delighted with the "feather-room," if their kind hostess allowed them to see it, as no doubt she did.

Her new house at Sandleford was a source of equal pleasure with the town mansion.

"As fast as time wrinkles my forehead," she writes in 1781, "I smooth the ground about Sandleford. In a little while I shall never see anything belonging to me that is not pretty, except when I behold myself in the looking-glass. . . . The noble rooms which Mr. Wyatt was building when you were at Sandleford, are now finishing with the greatest simplicity."

Her ample fortune enabled her to do much for the pleasure of the large family of young relations with whom she loved to surround herself:

"As age is apt to bring with it a certain degree of melancholy and discontent, I endeavour to prevent its having that effect by sympathizing in the joy of my young friends. . . . Life never knows the return of spring, and I am always an advocate for their gathering the primroses of their time. A young person not allowed to please himself sometimes will lose any desire to please others."

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She was an admirable counsellor as well as a delightful chaperon:

"The chief honour and felicity of my life has been derived from the superior merit of my friends; principles, opinions, habits, are acquired from those with whom we live and converse most. . . . Be cautious, be delicate, be a little ambitious, my dear niece, in the choice of your friends. I would be far from inculcating a supercilious contempt for persons of weak understanding, or a consorious condemnation of their levity of manners. Humility and charity are the greatest virtues, and let them ever guide your manners and regulate your conversation. . . . But be assured that the wisest persons are the least severe, and the most virtuous are the most charitable."

In the following year there was an alarm of fire at Sandleford, and she says the most useful person in the household, next to her nephew Matthew, was an old blind man, to whom she had given a home for fifteen years, ever since he lost his sight. Some of the beams and rafters caught fire, and "the first water thrown on the flames boiled up;" but all danger was over in an hour.

"I was much complimented on my courage," she says, "from which my composure was supposed to arise, but I confess that composure had its rise in cowardice. I was so glad to find our lives were not in danger, that the consequences threatened to my property made little impression."

Her greatest satisfaction in 1785 arose from the marriage of her heir and nephew Matthew Montagu* (born Robinson) to a gentle and

* Of this nephew, Wraxall wrote:—"The celebrated Mrs.

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charming ward in Chancery, Miss Charlton. Mrs. Montagu attended the wedding in Marylebone Church, and drove with the bride and bridegroom to Sandleford, which, she says, much pleased Mrs. Matthew Montagu.

"It was always the favourite of her husband, and now he has got a fair Eve, it appears to him a Paradise. I am in perfect health and perfect content; and we are three as happy people as can be found in any part of the habitable globe."

Seventeen years longer Mrs. Montagu shared the happiness of her adopted children. Her nephew seems to have much resembled in disposition what she was in her own youth, for she writes:—

"He acquitted himself admirably at Bath. He usually opened the ball and danced to the last. Indeed, with a great deal of prudence and discretion, he has as gay spirits as any one I ever knew. So he is happy at all times and in all places, and makes those who are with him so."

She herself retained, almost to the last, spirits enough to enjoy society, and continue what Miss

Montagu having adopted him as her heir, he received her husband's name. At her feet he was brought up—a school more adapted to form a man of taste and improvement, than a statesman or a man of the world. After this gentleman entered the House of Commons there was some difficulty in distinguishing between him, Matthew Montagu, and Montagu Matthew. General Matthew himself defined the distinction. "I wish it to be understood," said he, "that there is no more likeness between Montagu Matthew and Matthew Montagu than between a chestnut horse and a horse-chestnut."

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Burney called her "magnificent usefulness." Under her roof still assembled the intellectual leaders of the age — Burke, Wilberforce, and Mackenzie among them; and she gave great dinners to great people—Luxembourgs, Montmorencies, and Czartoriskis.

But a time came at last to her, as it comes to all, when nature asserted itself over habit. In 1798 Dr. Burney wrote of her as almost blind and very feeble. In 1799 she saw no one but her family and most intimate friends; and in 1800 she died, "prepared to pass thankfully to her rest."

"In the days of her maidenhood," says Dr. Doran, "when she was glad in her youth and in her beauty, and conscious of her intellect, yet unconscious of the pleasures, duties, and trials before her, and fearing she might live idle and die vain, she said—'If ever I have an inscription over me, it shall be without a name, and only, "Here lieś one whom, having done no harm, no one should censure; and having done no good, no one can commend. Who, for past folly, only asks oblivion."' She lived, however, to do much good, to make great amends for small and venial follies, and to merit such pains as it may cost a poor chronicler to rescue her name and deeds from the oblivion which she asked in the pleasant days of her bright youth and her subduing beauty."

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# LADY ANNE BARNARD: THE AUTHORESS OF "AULD ROBIN GRAY."

THE name of Baldric de Lindsay appears in Domesday Book; and from that time to the present there have been Lindsays in every generation famous in arts or arms.

There is nothing they have more reason to be proud of, however, than one simple ballad, which has retained unprecedented popularity for more than a hundred years, and which in its early days of fame "became the subject of a romance, a play, an opera, and a pantomime; was sung by the united armies in America, and performed by dogs in the streets." Its authorship, first attributed to David Rizzio, was long a problem for the Scottish Society of Antiquaries. Now, the name of the poetess is almost as well known as the poem, but, in general, little more than her name.

Fortunately, the Lindsays, amongst their other

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good gifts, have transmitted from father to child, since the days of that shrewd humorist and poet "old Pitscottie" (better known as Scott's "Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, Lord Lion-King-at-Arms"), a love and talent for writing. Their memoirs, diaries, and recollections abound; and the manuscripts used by the late Earl of Crawford in his family history furnish many interesting particulars about the authoress of "Auld Robin Gray," the most spirited reminiscences being from her own pen.

In the middle of the last century, the old house of Balcarres, Fifeshire, was "the nest where eleven brother-and-sister chickens were hatched and fostered—chickens who through life have never known once what it was to peck at each other." Lady Anne Lindsay, the eldest of the "brood," was born in 1750—eight brothers and two sisters quickly following.

Their father, James, third Earl of Balcarres, had succeeded in 1736 to the title and estate (much hampered with Jacobite debts) of his brother Alexander. At that time Earl James's health was little better than his fortune; but some letters which passed between him and his beloved sister, Lady Elizabeth (a still more confirmed invalid) show how cheerfully he met both trials.

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"You wonder how I get siller to live in London," he writes in June, 1738. "Your wonder will cease if you consider me as a well-dressed hermit. . . . I have a single friend here, who lives with the same abstinence as I have done of late. We eat milk, and laugh at the follies of the world without ill-nature. . . . It's vanity that seems to make most men unhappy—almost every one wants to make a figure that neither fortune nor nature intended."

The Earl was anxious to join our "army in Flanders"—was in London, indeed, chiefly with that object. But his sister opposed it with anxious tenderness:

"You write to my mother," she says, "to make herself easy with thoughts of your being in the last war without being hurt. Had you the youth, health and strength of those days, the argument would be good; but now it is none . . . I'm pretty sure none of your generals would stir a step, were they in no better health than you are."

He went, however, with his troop, in 1742; encountering all risks and hardships with serene philosophy, and relating every incident of the march which might cheer the loving mother and sister left behind.

"I think myself obliged to your princes for diverting you," writes the latter, in return, "and to the nuns for singing to you, and to every creature that does you any good. I believe the princes with you are as poor as the nobles with us—but the nuns, I fancy, live better, and are merrier than I have been for most part of my life."

Her brother did not feel very proud of the campaign. After Dettingen he writes: "It's

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probable our troops will ere long repass the Rhine, with the few laurels our country has paid so dear for. I am almost of opinion a well-dressed field of wheat is preferable to a wood of them." * To the wheat-fields he returned in the following year, barely in time to say farewell to his sister, whom he fondly called "the most perfect pattern of agreeable virtue he ever knew."

Being refused promotion by King George, after serving him for forty years, on the ground of his youthful adherence to the Stuarts, Lord Balcarres sold his commission, paid off a heavy debt on his estate, and retired to the family seat—"the chief of his clan, but the last of his race." There, with a few old servants and a great many old books, he was for a time completely engrossed by study and farming. But he had too genial a nature to be long satisfied with solitude, and went to Moffat, about fifty miles from Balcarres, "to drink the waters." On the night of his arrival he was expected at a party at which there were several young ladies, who joked among themselves as to their chances of captivating Lord Balcarres.

"You need not give yourselves so much trouble," said Miss Dalrymple of Castleton, who had never seen him—"I know he will fix on *me*." When at

* "Lives of the Lindsays," vol. ii. pp. 207–223.

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last he appeared, his hostess said playfully, "My Lord, here is choice for you." Walking to Miss Dalrymple's side, he startled her by putting his finger on her shoulder, and saying, "I fix here."

The young lady was fair, blooming and lively. "Her beauty and *embonpoint*," writes Lady Anne, "charmed my dear, tall, lean, majestic father. . . . She had worth, honour, activity, good sense, economy, justice, generosity, everything but softness." He, seeing with the eyes of his heart, and hearing with the ears of his imagination, thought her an angel in human form, like the sister he had lost five years before. For some time his adoration met with small return.

Lord Balcarres was sixty—and the world reckoned him eighty! Though his appearance was dignified, it was also odd. To his large three-tailed brigadier wig, he added a few curls of his own application, which would not, says his daughter, "have been reckoned quite orthodox by the trade." His shoe, "which resembled a little boat with a cabin at the end of it," was slashed with his penknife to ease his toes. Ladies generally found his courtesy and gallantry, his good, simple nature and amusing conversation, very attractive. But to take him for life was a different thing. Miss Dalrymple first hesitated,

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then refused. Her lover fell ill, his life was despaired of; he made his will, and settled half his estate on the cruel fair one. His man of business told her the secret. Grateful and surprised, she cured her generous lover by promising to marry him; and in the manuscript memoirs from which his descendant has so largely quoted, Earl James says of his bride:

"She brought him an approved merit, with all the ornaments of beauty. She gave him a numerous offspring, and all other blessings. Possessed of the rational felicities so often overlooked in this vain world, he became thankful to his Maker for his disappointments in the visionary aims that so disturb the minds of men."

The only point on which Earl James seems ever to have questioned his wife's judgment was her somewhat severe handling of their young family.

"Alas!" says Lady Anne, "our house was not merely a school of acquirements, it was often a sort of little Bastile, in every closet of which was to be found a culprit—some were sobbing and repeating verbs, others eating their bread and water—some preparing to be whipped, and here and there a fat little Cupid, having been flogged by Venus, was enjoying a most enviable nap. 'Ods fish, Madam,' the Earl would say, 'you will break the spirits of my young troops—I will not have it so!'" *

* The chief fault attributed to the eldest boy was obstinacy, and his place of punishment was a room containing a scarlet curtain. This so associated the crime and the colour, that he told his sister in after-life he was never in a room with scarlet curtains without thinking—"What an obstinate dog must have been confined here!"

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But Lord Balcarres seems never to have done more than remonstrate. The Spartan system prevailed, and at last Lady Margaret, the second daughter, "who had a taste for public speaking," assembled the little victims and proposed that they should take refuge from the "horrious" languages, geography, and history with which they were tortured, in the house of a friend with whom she had once "spent a fortnight after the whooping-cough very agreeably indeed." The motion was carried by acclamation; and shortly afterwards a shepherd appeared before Lady Balcarres with the startling announcement, "All the young gentlemen and the young ladies, and all the dogs, are run away, my lady!" The culprits were soon captured, told that "whipping was too good for them," and sentenced to a "dose of tincture of rhubarb apiece."

Nevertheless, continues Lady Anne,

"we were not without pleasures. We often paddled in a glen at some little distance from the château, and were half way up the legs in water. Margaret's dress and mine, perhaps, were not exactly calculated for bathing in; we wore yellow and silver silks, made out of an old wedding-gown of Lady Balcarres'. The pattern being scanty for two, it had been flounced with blue gauze, which tucking up, with our trains of capacious silver flowers, Pharaoh's daughter made not a more splendid appearance when pulling Moses out from the bulrushes. Between twelve and one, while the

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tutor took his walk, we galloped in squadron to visit the fat oxen in the farmyard, partook of their turnips uninvited, and sat down on their lazy sirloins ; paid our compliments to the swine, fed our pigeons, and played at swing."

The happiest day in the week was Sunday, when there were only twelve verses of a psalm to learn, and service to be attended at a church two miles off, where they all listened dutifully to the discordant utterances of a Presbyterian congregation; a discord, says Lady Anne, with her usual quaint mixture of jest and earnest, "to me more pious in its willing praise than all the organs or hired choirs in the world—and exceeded in the sensations it awakens by nothing but a congregation of converted Hottentots joining in one hymn."

Her home, with its clear shining lake, its tall trees inhabited by faithful rooks, its semicircle of sea, from which the Bass Rock rose exactly opposite to the Castle, she describes with all the enthusiasm of a Scotchwoman, joined to her individual sense of humour. A fountain in the garden was presided over by a stone Venus, who in the previous generation had arrived from Italy —"with all the *éclat* of a Medicean beauty." But during her residence at Balcarres, Venus had the misfortune to lose an arm by one accident and her nose by another. Both were supplied by a

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neighbouring stonecutter; the nose, he said, being "made after the fashion of the Countess's." Nothing was wanting, sums up Lady Anne, to render Balcarres a noble place, "but money." This important want must be remembered in excuse for the Countess's asperities. Her temper was strained and ruffled by the perpetual conflict between rank and birth, and narrow means. "You see," she wrote to a friend, to whom she gave some commission,

"I'm very thrifty. And you would think it very necessary, had you seen us some nights ago at a family ball, when we were about fifty souls all belonging to this identical house. Literally all of them breakfast, dine, and sup off our little bit land."

Amongst this large family party were Lady Dalrymple, the Countess's mother — a placid, pleasing old woman, "whose indolence had benevolence in it, and whose sense was replete with indolence;" Mrs. Cockburn of Ormiston, authoress of the well-known song "The Flowers of the Forest;" three Misses Keith, cousins of the Countess;* a certain Henrietta C——, "the least

* Two of these ladies were friends of Scott. Mrs. Cockburn's intellect and imagination, he said, "must have been delightful in youth, and were almost preternatural in age;" Anne Murray Keith (his "Mrs. Bethune Baliol") was the first to identify him as the author of "Waverley" by finding so many of her own stories scattered over the Scottish novels. "D'ye think I dinna ken my ain groats amang ither folks' kail?" she asked.

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little woman ever seen for nothing"—whom Lady Balcarres had discovered "weeping and painting butterflies" in an Edinburgh garret, and carried home to assist her in developing the talent of her young tribe; and Miss Sophy Johnstone, who went to Balcarres for a few months and stayed for thirteen years.

This lady's history might have furnished Mortimer Collins with the leading idea of "Squire Silchester's Whim." Her father, the Laird of Hilton, held that "education was all nonsense," and made his wife join him in a vow that their child should never be taught anything. "Nature," says Lady Anne, "seems to have entered into the jest, and hesitated to the last whether to make her a boy or a girl." She hunted, wrestled, sawed wood with the carpenter, shoed a horse quicker than the smith, played the fiddle, and sang a man's song in a bass voice. Her talent for mimicry made her enemies, and her violent attachments secured her a few warm friends. "Placed among such diverse characters," says Lady Anne, "I learnt that great dislike of making others unhappy which is a negative virtue; and that peace of mind from self-command which is a solid blessing."

Some of the visitors at Balcarres were even more remarkable than the residents. Amongst

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them were David Hume, who on one occasion joined in a Christmas frolic—each of the party writing his or her character, and Hume imposing the manuscripts on his host as extracts taken from the Vatican library: the Countess's honesty and the Earl's shrewdness all but revealed the plot, for, pausing over one manuscript, the latter said, "If you had not told me where you got this character, Hume, I should have said it was that of my wife;" * "Ambassador Reith," the chivalrous and accomplished champion of the unhappy Caroline Matilda; Dr. John Rutherford, maternal grandfather of Walter Scott; Sir Adolphus Oughton, whose learning and sweet temper were acknowledged by Johnson—and many others who do not figure so prominently in the biographies of last century.

Lady Anne's chief friend among the elders of the family was her father.

"Almost my first recollection," she says, "is seeing him occupied with dusty papers sent him in a tartan plaid by

* "I am very proud that my history appears to have something tolerable in your lordship's eyes," wrote Hume, in 1754. "It has full as many inveterate enemies as partial defenders. . . . I observe that the book is in general rather more agreeable to those they call Tories. And I believe chiefly from this reason, that having no places to bestow, they are more moderate in their expectations from a writer. A Whig, who can give hundreds a year, will not be contented with small sacrifices of truth; and most authors are willing to purchase favour at so reasonable a price."



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the old Laird of MacFarlane—the ugliest chieftain, with the reddest nose, I had ever beheld. I afterwards learnt that, being a famous genealogist and antiquarian, my father had applied to him for information to complete the pedigree of his family. Possessed of the necessary papers, he pursued his work with delight, while I watched his pen, rejoiced at seeing him so well amused. I was rewarded with a few sugar-plums from the children's drawer for the attention I showed, which flowed from my heart, independent of all views on the crusted almonds."

Many stories are told of the Earl's kindness of heart, of which this is a sample: visiting a field of turnips on which he greatly prided himself, he found an old pensioner of his busily filling a sack with his fine favourites. He gave her a scolding, to which she only replied with a curtsey, and he was walking away, when she called after him: "Eh, my Lord, it's unco' heavy! Wad ye no be so kind as help me on wi' 't?" which he did, and the old woman trudged off rejoicing. One year almost every important house in Fifeshire was attacked by robbers, who were at last carried before the County Court. "Why did you never come to me?" asked Lord Balcarres. "We often did, my Lord," they replied, "but your doors always stood open, and then it is our rule not to enter."

His death, in February, 1768, made the first great break in the family. He met its approach

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with the manly and pleasant composure he had maintained throughout life. "I have lived beyond the age of man," he said, "and have nothing to complain of but that I have not been able to be so good as we all ought to be." He escaped the evils of old age, wrote his wife, "at the instant they threatened to lay hold of him; and rather ceased to be, than underwent the sting of death." Besides his invaluable manuscript memoirs, he left behind a poetical epistle to his wife, and a "System of Agriculture," on which he was qualified to speak, having been the first to bring farming to any perfection in his native county. He loved Montaigne, whose humorous wisdom was often on his lips, and the old French fairy tales; and he had, says his great-grandson quaintly, "a peculiar sympathy with St. James, and delight in his Catholic Epistle, as that emphatically of a gentleman—a term implying, in his acceptance of it, all Christian excellence and perfection."

After the Earl's death, old Lady Dalrymple and Anne Murray Keith settled in Edinburgh, thus widening the horizon for the eleven young people whom the widowed Countess was bringing up at Balcarres, and who had formerly seen the Modern Athens "sweetly smoking in the distance," without being allowed to incur the expense and

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fatigue of a visit to it. A most charming and engaging group they form, painted for us not only by their loving sister and biographer, but by their own affectionate and clever letters. While the elders were growing into "honest men and bonnie lassies," such as Scotland may be justly proud of rearing, the "second battalion of infantry," as Lady Anne calls them, early showed their characters and tastes.

"James, a spirited, fine little child, began to shoulder his little cane and fancy himself a soldier; William, animated and good-looking, declared he was a commodore; Charles, sweet-blooded, could not understand what any one could mean by fighting—he was to be a clergyman."

John, pleasant and eccentric, unfettered and free, was more difficult to dispose of. "He respected no rules and no person." A plaything being taken from him by the Countess as a punishment for a repeated offence, he exclaimed, "Woman, I told you I would do the same, and I'll do the same to-morrow!" The morrow came, the sin was repeated, another plaything was withdrawn; but the little philosopher looked at the sunshine and observed, "Here is a fine day, and my mother cannot take it from me!"

The first to leave the parent nest was Alexander, the young Earl of Balcarres, who at fifteen purchased an ensigncy in the 53rd Foot, joined his

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regiment at Gibraltar, and then went to Gottingen to study. For several years he lived almost entirely on his pay, devoting his income to clearing the estate and assisting his brothers; thus fulfilling the injunctions of his father, who told him that with two jointures to pay,* and his brothers and sisters to provide for, he would require to be prudent and careful; but adding, "when your circumstances become better, never save your money, when justice, charity, or honour require you to part with it."

The young Earl served with distinction in the American War, but his regiment surrendered on Burgoyne's convention at Saratoga, and he was sent to New York, where he declined to accept his liberty at the expense, as he said, of "the pleasure he felt in sharing the fate of his regiment."†

* A Dowager Lady Balcarres, widow of Earl Alexander, was then living in the Lawn Market, Edinburgh. She was a very remote descendant of the wizard Michael Scott, and appropriately strong-minded and eccentric.

† Irving, in his "Life of Washington," praises Lord Balcarres' bravery. Mr. Stuart ("Three Years in North America," vol. ii. p. 462) says that during the residence of General Benedict Arnold in England, George III. attempted to introduce the two former foes. "What, sire!" exclaimed the Earl, drawing himself up—"the traitor Arnold?" A challenge followed, and it was arranged that they should fire by signal. Arnold fired and missed; Lord Balcarres turned on his heel to walk away. "Why don't you fire, my lord?" cried Arnold. "Sir," said Balcarres, looking over his shoulder, "I leave you to the executioner."

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Two years later he returned home, married his cousin Miss Dalrymple, and in 1784 was chosen one of the sixteen representative peers of Scotland. He was not always in accord with the Tory ministry, and Pitt said of him most characteristically, "Balcarres was out of humour with us when in prosperity, but staunch when we were in danger —that is the man!"

In 1793, Lord Balcarres was made Governor and Commander of the Forces in Jersey, where his active co-operation with the army of La Vendée was worthy of his Jacobite blood; and in 1796 he went as Governor to Jamaica, holding that post for seven years, and doing such service in suppressing the Maroon rebellion that the Assembly voted 700 guineas for a sword, presented to him on behalf of a grateful colony. He left the island amidst general regret, and settled on his wife's estate, Haigh Hall, Lancashire, which he raised from ruin and desolation to prosperity. His son, the seventh Earl of Balcarres, became twenty-fourth Earl of Crawford in 1848, and was created a British peer as Baron Wigan.

To return to the old Scottish mansion. Lady Margaret was the next to take flight, and Lady Anne gives the sweetest sketch ever drawn by sister of her angelic face, with its dark-blue eyes

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and red-gold hair; her voice, whose rich pathetic melody moved her listeners to tears; her clear and thoughtful mind; her purity, piety, and benevolence of character; an over-acute sensibility was, she adds, "Margaret's only imperfection."

"Often," writes Lady Anne, "when I 'could not see the wood for trees,' Margaret saw not a twig more or less than she ought . . . I know not how she acquired knowledge . . . our old library, in which we had leave to 'drive through the sea of books without pilot or rudder,' afforded the same musty volumes to both sisters. But the owls hooted away all the philosophers taught me, while Margaret's memory retained everything."

Gifted though she was by nature, Lady Margaret's fate was a very sad one. Her early marriage was most unfortunate—ruin and disgrace overtook her husband when she was only nineteen, and her beautiful home was utterly wrecked. But through every trial her letters to her husband and sister show an exquisite combination of playful tenderness, fortitude, and religious patience. Many years after Mr. Fordyce's death she is said to have suffered deeply "from the attachment of a man who sacrificed her life and happiness to his selfishness." And only very late did she know a brief Indian summer—two years of affectionate companionship with one who, as he then acknowledged, had loved her "almost from infancy"—a glimpse of peace

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which, says Lady Anne, "she braved the smiles of the world to fold to her heart." *

When her "sweet young Peg" had married and gone to England, Lady Anne spent more time than ever in her little room in the high winding staircase "which commanded the sea, the lake, the rock, the birds, the beach," poring over old volumes, or scribbling verse or prose on the "envelopes of old letters." One day a fancy took her to write new words to a Scottish air which Sophy Johnstone (the "child of nature") used to sing, the old ones being unsuited to its plaintive beauty; and in the course of her attempt, she came to a standstill. Calling her sister Elizabeth, who was at play hard by, she said—

"I have been writing a ballad, my dear. I am oppressing my heroine with many misfortunes—I have sent her Jamie to sea, and broken her father's arm, and made her mother fall sick, and given her Auld Robin Gray † for a lover: but I wish to load her with a fifth sorrow in the four lines, poor thing! Help me to one, I pray."

"Steal the cow, sister Anne," said little Elizabeth. The cow was *lifted*, and the ballad completed.

* Lady Margaret Fordyce inspired Sheridan's once well-known lines, beginning, "Marked you her eye of heavenly blue;" and she not only inspired poetry but wrote it. Some of her playful verses to members of her family, and translations from Haller and Bürger (including "Lenore"), are given in the "Lives of the Lindsays."

† Named after the herdsman at Balcarres, who had announced the flight of the children long before.

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But although willing to *sing* it whenever asked—and when once sung it passed electrically from heart to heart and lip to lip, till soon there was scarcely a fireside in Great Britain where it had not been heard—Lady Anne never admitted its authorship, except to her mother, till within two years of her death. The first to detect her, out of her own family, was Lady Jane Scott, sister of the Duke of Buccleuch, who shrewdly said to her at Dalkeith, "You sing that song in a way that makes me sure it is your own writing"—and extorted a copy of the words as the price of silence.

Lady Anne let the press and the public—learned societies and private friends—puzzle over it in vain, till, seeing it attributed to herself in the "Pirate," she wrote to Sir Walter Scott asking him to thank the "author of 'Waverley'" for his discrimination.

Scott replied that although he could not tell why the mysterious "auther of 'Waverley'" should have ascribed the poem to its real author, he himself had felt no doubt about it for forty years. And after some reminiscences of Sophy Johnstone, "with her jockey coat, masculine stride, strong voice, and occasionally round oath;" and of the Countess, whom by right of a far-away "cousinred" (through the Duffs and Dalrymples) he used to be

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allowed to attend to the theatre *—he asked Lady Anne to allow him to furnish the Bannatyne Club † with a correct version of the ballad, its history and authorship. To this she agreed, and a thin quarto volume was printed and circulated among the members in 1842. There was a second part (written in response to the Countess's "Annie! I wish you would tell me how that unlucky business of Jeanie and Jamie ended?"); but, like most sequels, it is sadly inferior to the original song.

While "Auld Robin Gray" was achieving a world-wide reputation, many changes were taking place in its author's family. Robert, the second son, went to India, and by indefatigable industry and integrity—after being, as circumstances required, "soldier, magistrate, political agent, farmer, ornamental gardener, elephant-catcher, tiger-hunter, shipbuilder, lime-manufacturer, physician and surgeon"—made a fortune which enabled him to lavish benefits on his family, old servants, and humble friends, and, returning to Fifeshire in the prime of life, make a most happy marriage with a fair cousin he had "marked for his own" before he went abroad.

* Her fondness for this amusement caused the crabbed Dowager Countess to call her "the good-wife of the play-house."

† An Edinburgh literary society, whose chief object was the preservation of "floating records of Scottish history and antiquities."

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Colin, the third son, called "Don Quixote" from his punctilious honour—amiable, elegant, animated, and "the very soul of truth"—entered the army, and served in the American War; in the West Indies; and in the defence of Gibraltar. There, when provisions were scarce, and a pound of tea cost a guinea, a little ship from Fifeshire managed to run the blockade. Unfortunately, the skipper had no sooner landed, than he quarrelled with a young officer and received a challenge. Making his way to Captain Lindsay, whom he knew by name, the sailor begged him to be his second; adding in lowered tones, "If ye will, I'll gie ye a pound o' tea!" "Make it two," whispered Colin, "and I'll fight your duel for you!" The bargain was struck; Captain Lindsay called on the offended officer and made him laugh at the story, and promise to shake hands with the skipper; and inviting them both to meet a party of brother-officers that evening, he regaled them all on the precious tea.

John Lindsay, who had a company in the 2nd Battalion of the 73rd Foot, received four wounds, was taken prisoner at Conjeveram in 1780, and, during a captivity of nearly four years, suffered every description of hardship. His account of this long captivity was pronounced by the

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*Quarterley Review* "one of the most interesting journals we ever read, portraying most unaffectedly the charming temper and imperturbable spirit of the writer." He quitted the army in 1801, having married Charlotte, daughter of the Earl of Guildford —well remembered as almost the only lady whose mind, character, and position gave respectability to the household of the Princess of Wales, till at last even she was induced by her friends and her brother to leave her indiscreet and undignified mistress. Scott said that Lady Charlotte's spontaneous wit reminded him of "the gifted princess who could not comb her locks without producing pearls and rubies." Her goodness and amiability made her like a third sister to Mary and Agnes Berry, near whom she spent her later years, that they might "help one another down hill and be only desirous of going first." *

While John Lindsay was imprisoned in Seringapatam, his brother James fell, storming the redoubts of Cuddalore. He was taken to the French hospital and humanely treated, bearing the agony of a grapeshot in the knee with wonderful cheerfulness. In a few days he felt so well that he sent for a fiddle, with which to amuse himself, But it

* "Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry," vol. iii. p. 486.

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had hardly arrived when he exclaimed, "I am ill—all is over," and died in a few hours. His brother Balcarres said, "All the army adored him."

William and Hugh entered the navy. The former, a gallant young officer, was drowned at St. Helena. The latter, after the American War, quitted the King's service for that of the East India Company. Charles became Bishop of Kildare, and head of a "numerous tribe" of Lindsays in Ireland. The poor round about Glasnevin called him "the darlin' Lord Bishop." He lived amongst them, increasingly beloved, till his eighty-sixth year.

The beautiful little Elizabeth, who had "lifted the cow" for her sister, grew a brilliant woman, married the third Earl of Hardwicke,* and became mother of Ladies Mexborough, Caledon, Somers, and Stuart de Rothesay. Her eldest son, Viscount Royston, a young man of amiable disposition and great promise, was drowned in the stranding of the *Agatha*, of Lubeck, off Memel, in 1808, within a month of completing his twenty-fourth year. He had been travelling for four years; and his letters from abroad, with a translation of Lycophron's "Cassandra," etc., were published post-

* Sharp's "Genealogical Peerage" erroneously calls Lady Hardwicke "eldest" instead of youngest daughter of the fifth Earl of Balcarres.

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humously, edited by the Rev. Henry Pepys, afterwards Bishop of Worcester. Both the Countess of Hardwicke's other sons died in childhood. She herself survived till 1858, when she was ninety-five years old.

Meanwhile, Lady Anne and Lady Margaret, again united, made a home in London, where a circle of admirers gathered round them, amongst whom Burke,* Sheridan, Dundas, and Wyndham were conspicuous. Lady Anne—graceful, witty, elegant, with "an unequalled power of pleasing" —had the almost unique distinction of the Prince of Wales's disinterested friendship. Once, when he was very ill, he sent for "Sister Anne as he called her, and said that as they might never meet again, he wished to assure her of his love, and beg her acceptance of a gold chain in remembrance of him.

Lady Anne had many "eligible" offers, but, according to one of her favourite nephews—

* Burke lost his only and idolized son in 1794, and Lady Anne wrote him a letter of condolence, of which he said, "It is as consolatory as anything can be. She acquits me of faults towards my son. I would to God my conscience could do the same. I could better bear the most insupportable of all calamities. On the contrary, my mind runs over a thousand improprieties, neglects, and mismanagements of every kind—all, indeed, except a fundamental want of honour, respect, and love for him. Amidst all those offences, how could he be sensible how dearly, dearly I prized him?"

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"indecision was her failing—hesitation upset her judgment. Her heart had never been captured, and she remained single till late in life, when she married an accomplished but not wealthy gentleman"—Mr. Barnard, son of the Bishop of Limerick—"whom she accompanied to the Cape of Good Hope in 1797, on his appointment as Colonial Secretary under Lord Macartney." *

"I was supposed to be a sort of binding cement," she says, "such, I presume, as the castles of antiquity were formerly made with: light, strong, and powerful towards associating together the scattered atoms of society." The task assigned her was no light one, but she was admirably fitted to accomplish it. From her Fifeshire birthplace she had brought a love of exercise and adventure, with those buoyant spirits for which the "light Lindsays" were proverbial; and she had acquired tact, grace, and knowledge of human nature in the best social circles of Edinburgh and London: add boundless kindness of heart and ready wit to these qualifications, and what more could be desired in a Vice-Queen?

The Earl of Macartney's life had been one long lesson in diplomacy, from the time when, at twenty-seven, on his return from "making the Grand Tour," he was sent as Envoy Extraordinary to the Empress of Russia. The offices of Chief

* The first English Governor.

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Secretary for Ireland, "Governor of Toome Castle" (a sinecure worth a thousand a year), Governor of the Island of Granada, and Governor of Madras, were held by him in swift succession. He was made Ambassador Extraordinary to Pekin, the first time England attempted to open diplomatic relations with China; and soon after his return from a confidential mission to Italy, he received his appointment to the Cape of Good Hope.

Lady Anne might well find a man of such literally world-wide experience "one of the best companions she ever met," especially as he was warmly attached to her husband. The gentlemen who had accompanied Lord Macartney on his other embassies saw his manner to Mr. Barnard with wonder. They had thought the Earl cold, politic, and invulnerable. But, says Lady Anne, "they had never tried to gain his heart, though they had served him faithfully." Mr. Barnard, like his wife, had too affectionate and genial a disposition to maintain cold official relations towards any one, and with them their chief so unbent that they found in his society "everlasting entertainment and instruction too—when we had him to ourselves." *

* Wraxall calls Lord Macartney "a man of unimpeached integrity, elevated views, and always attentive to the great public

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The new Governor needed all his *savoir faire.* His coming had been held as a sort of bugbear over the heads of the colonists, every unpleasant new law being postponed till that dreaded period. Sir James Craig, left in temporary command after our capture of the Cape, was anxious, Lady Anne was informed, to figure as the protector of the conquered people—and the protector not only of their honest gains but of every imposition they could put on the English troops. Waggons arriving with provisions from the interior were intercepted at daybreak by the burghers, who, buying up the articles at the old rate, sold them to the English at their own price. This sort of thing was inconvenient, of course. But then, thought Sir James, the new Governor could make it right. *

This much-expected man arrived at last. And as after long suspense "to know the worst becomes a sort of vile happiness," his Excellency's arrival, says Lady Anne, gave the Dutch "that sort of cold bath which at once shocks the frame and braces the constitution."

interests committed to his care; yet wanting amenity of manners, ductility, and powers of conciliation."—"Posthumous Memoirs," vol. i. p. 265.

* "Remember," she often cautions her readers, "I simply, like a parrot, repeat what I have heard."



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The voyagers were favourably impressed by the first glimpse of their future home. The day was brilliant, the outline of the country bold, daring, but calm. Cape Town surprised them by being no collection of rude huts, but "clean, correct, and respectable." They landed on May 4th, and Lady Anne began to revolve in her mind plans for reconciling the Dutch to the sight of their masters "by the attraction of fiddles and French horns." Before this could be attempted, however, King George's new subjects had to take the oath of allegiance; the Castle gates were thrown open every morning, and Lady Anne was astonished at the number of well-fed, rosy-cheeked citizens, with powdered hair and black suits, who marched up in pairs to see the King's representative.

After the burghers came the boors, farmers and settlers from the country, who seemed much to dislike their errand. "They shook hands with each other, but they shook their heads too, in a manner that said, 'There is no help for it; we must swear, for they are the strongest.'" The size of these "sulky youths" was enormous. Most of them were upwards of six feet high, and stout in proportion. They wore blue cloth suits and large flat hats, and they arrived in waggons, which, true to the thrifty Dutch nature, were laden

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with merchandise, so that they might do a day's trading after presenting themselves at the Castle. A Hottentot servant, carrying his master's umbrella, crept behind each countryman: their toilet was inexpensive and simple, consisting of a piece of leather round the waist, a sheepskin over the shoulders, and sometimes a scarlet handkerchief on the head. Lady Anne thought them less repulsive than report had painted. "The expression of their eyes is sweet and inoffensive," she says, "and their features are small and not ill-shaped."

A ball given at the Government House by Sir James Craig introduced the polished part of Cape society to Lord Macartney and his party.

"The ball-room was lined with two rows of ladies, all tolerably well-dressed, and all 'mad in white muslin.' . . . But here was no real beauty, no manner, no graces, no charms—only the freshness of health, and a vulgar smartness accompanying it, which spoke the torch of Prometheus animating them to be of mutton-tail. They danced without halting a moment, in a sort of pit-a-pat, tingling little step. . . . What they want most is shoulders and softness of manners. The term 'a Dutch doll' was quite explained to me when I saw their make and recollected the dolls; but what is most exceptionable about them is their teeth and the size of their feet. A tradesman in London, hearing they were very large, sent a box of shoes on speculation, which almost put the colony in a blaze, so angry were the fair ones. But day by day a pair were sent for by a slave in the dark, till at last the shoes vanished."

Very few Dutchmen attended the ball; the

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Fiscal (head officer of justice), President of the Court, and others in public positions only appeared and vanished, as though almost afraid of being seen there by each other, though they professed satisfaction with the state of affairs, and perfect cordiality towards English rule.

When the first rush of receptions was over, Lord Macartney assigned to Mr. Barnard and his wife a little country house called Paradise, at the back of Table Mountain, which rose three thousand feet above it—"spiral, wooded, and picturesque." Before the house stood a row of fruit-laden orange-trees; behind it lay a well-stocked garden watered by a mountain stream; and on the left rose a grove of fir-trees.* But appropriately to its name, the road to Paradise was hard and difficult: it had to be traversed chiefly on foot, and was intersected by gullies so deep that when Lady Anne jumped across them, she thought, if her foot had slipped, she would have found herself in England.

At Paradise Lady Anne inspected or collected many curiosities—animal, vegetable and mineral—some of which greatly amused Lord Mornington, when he visited the Cape on his way to India. There were a pair of secretary-birds, who strutted

* A later visitor (1812) says, "We wandered through coppices of greenhouse plants, and forced our way through thickets of exotics."

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about on their long legs "with the air of fine gentlemen," but were particular about always sitting down to dinner: a sea calf, a very foolish creature, calf as to his countenance but with fins for feet, who plunged into the water in sulky indignation when laughed at for waddling; and a penguin, "a link between fish and fowl, as the calf was between fish and beast," who spent half her day in the pond with the calf, and half in the house with her mistress, looking much like an old lady in a *sacque*, with long ruffles. For the baboons, who came down in marauding parties in the fruit season, Lady Anne pleaded in vain. The gardener insisted on catching and whipping one of the offenders, who would then run chattering to his comrades and warn them from the spot.

In the vegetable world, among things to be remembered were orange-trees forty feet high and nine in circumference; a most useful plant which, according to the gardener, furnished one kind of physic when scraped upwards and another when scraped downwards; the sugar-tree, whose lovely pink blossoms when boiled produce a syrup like honey, with which all the Cape preserves were made; a magical rose-tree bearing seven different kinds of roses which (it was *said*) blossomed every day exactly at four o'clock; and a fearful "star-

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plant," yellow, and spotted like a leopard skin, with a crop of glossy brown hair growing over it, "at once handsome and horrible," which crawled along the ground and had fat green leaves.

Of the seeds of the castor-oil-tree, which exactly resemble beads, Lady Anne made some necklaces for Queen Charlotte, who accepted them with thanks to the donor for preparing them for *external* application. Then how useful was the paint-stone, carrying in its heart a quantity of powder, of every colour but green, so finely ground that it only required mixing with oil to be ready for use, and employed by the boors on their houses, carts, etc.

Lady Anne thought the Cape grapes delicious, and the wine made from them very good, but she could not persuade her English guests to be of the same opinion, probably because they knew it could be bought for sixpence a bottle. On one occasion some Steine wine which had been pronounced detestable was sent to table as a fine old wine of Lord Macartney's, and eagerly drunk by the very men who had previously abused it. "Dey haf *not* got my lord's hock, my lady!" triumphantly whispered Mr. Barnard's servant. "Dey are socking in de kitchen wines, and I dare not tell 'em now, for dey will fancy dey are poisoned!"

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Picnics, excursions, and friendly visits to neighbouring colonists, sped the summer away. When these expeditions were made on foot "all the gentlemen envied the *braave vrouw* the lightness of her heels, the effect perhaps of the lightness of her heart." One of their visits was to Stellenbosch, the residence of the Landrost of the district—a fine house, in a pretty village of milk-white houses shaded by groves of oaks measuring from twelve to thirteen feet round. There was a church, and there were plenty of slaves, but no manufactures, and no cultivation. The luxuriance of nature did all and more than all the colonists required, with, generally speaking, a minimum of exertion on their part. From the Landrost's house they went to that of the clergyman, a carriage being sent after them for their use. Lady Anne was making some drawings which she feared detained the equipage too long.

"'Do not mind," said Mr. Barnard, laughing, 'it is used to it—see whose it lately was!' How were we entertained, to find it was actually that of 'old Q.'—that weary *vis-à-vis* which had been in the habit of *waiting* for the last forty years at the door of Brookes's Club! There was the ducal coronet, there were six horses to draw it (an apology from the Landrost for not sending eight), there was a Hottentot coachman clad in native charms—and well could he guide his beasts."

*Sic transit gloria mundi.*

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Meantime, Lord Macartney, acting on his favourite maxim, "To be respected one must begin with respecting," was endeavouring to conciliate the better class of burghers. And Lady Anne, when at the Castle, began her course of civilization by means of balls and musical parties. She had some amicable contests with the Fiscal, who wished her only to invite "true friends," whereas she desired to win over the disaffected. The result was that she secured plenty of Dutch ladies to act as partners for "the juvenile part of the army and navy," though their brothers and husbands preferred a quiet pipe on the *stoop* to cutting capers in a hot room.

"As to the men," says Lady Anne, provoked at their immovability—"the only amusements that interest them seem to be sales, ceremonials, and funerals. . . . A splendid funeral is the joy of their lives; nor are youth and beauty so attractive in a wife as being a steady housekeeper while she lives, and having so long a pedigree as to be envied for it at her death, every relation being invited by the public crier to the funeral, in whatever part of the globe the relation happens to be."

The position of public affairs was not calculated to sweeten the tempers or raise the spirits of the colonists. "Fatherland" was being goaded by the French into unwilling conflict with England, and the Dutch fleet was overwhelmed by the English squadron.

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When Mr. Barnard—"the poor *secretarius*—had been screwed to his desk for a whole twelvemonth," he was offered a month's holiday, and although it was again May, "the Cape November," and the beginning of the rainy season, he and Lady Anne thought the best use they could make of it was to take a trip to the interior. They were accompanied by their cousin John Dalrymple, a young lady called "Jane," Mr. Barnard's servant, Pawell, a little black boy, two slaves, and a Hottentot. They travelled in an eight-horse waggon, with some riding horses following. The waggon, crammed, besides its passengers, with provisions, bedding, candles, guns, baskets, and extra garments, must have looked like an "all sorts" shop on wheels, or a "Cheap Jack" establishment. But with such a quartette as Lady Anne and her husband, a gay young cornet and a beautiful girl, all was enjoyment; and the more extraordinary their experiences were, the better they were pleased. The ladies, indeed, were startled at finding that the guns slung above their heads were ready loaded; but their nerves stood even this test bravely.

At a wealthy colonist's, where they stopped to dine, a child of eighteen months was brought in, so heavy that no one could lift it from the ground.

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"Ah!" said the happy mother, "what would *mi vrow* give for such an one?" "I *thought*," says Lady Anne, "that like Solomon I should be tempted to make two of it." The greatest pride of the Dutch was in the size and number of their children.

At many points of their journey the travellers had to hire oxen, which dragged them so easily up such tremendous heights, that Lady Anne almost thought they could "pull us up to heaven, like Elijah." All went well till they got belated—night instantly follows sunset in those regions; in the darkness they drew to the edge of a bank. Lady Anne felt the wheel sinking on her side. "Down we went like a mountain, and everything in the world was above me!" Fortunately no one was seriously hurt.

"Jane sat on a stone, the statue of patience, condoling with herself over the bruises of her white marble arm, the rest of the figure in a state of perfect preservation in the saddest, sweetest sense of the word, as the cask of preserved ginger had its top knocked off in the fall and poured its contents in at Jane's neck and out at her toe."

The stupendous hills of dazzling white sand, with innumerable bucks racing over them, gave a strange charm to the scenery. "All appeared to be in deep snow, while the air had the charm of summer without its oppressive heat." At the "Government Baths," a sort of Cape Matlock,

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Lady Anne saw her first ostriches; they were only eight months old, but their long necks reached four feet above the horses' backs. One of them was offered two oranges, the second of which stuck in its throat, so it instantly picked up a stone nearly as large and swallowed that, to hammer the orange down!

The spot which most interested the Barnards during this tour was the famous settlement of the Moravian Fathers, which they knew they must be approaching long before it came in sight, from the superior cultivation of the land, the herds of cattle quietly grazing, and the indescribable look of general peace and prosperity—"the manna of the Almighty showered on His children." At that time, 1798, the Fathers had gathered round them three hundred Hottentots, glad to escape from the selfish oppression of the Boers (who in revenge for losing some of their slaves had fired at the Fathers with poisoned arrows), and learn simple trades, and the cultivation of their little gardens, from the gentle, kind-hearted missionaries. The religious instruction the natives delighted in, joining admirably in the hymns, and listening with tears to a short discourse addressed by one Father to his *lieve vriende*. Lady Anne, with her hereditary taste for agriculture, went warmly into the subject

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of their gardens and plantations, advising them to grow rice and potatoes, and pointing out spots suitable for orange-trees and vines. "We agreed with and understood each other," she says, "which I was vain of, as I doubt if my whole stock of Dutch amounts to two dozen words."

Shooting parties and fishing parties, in which the game and fish were so novel and abundant as to bewilder the sportsmen, occupied many adventurous days, and Lady Anne's pencil was as busy as her husband's gun.

One Dutch beauty only could she discover—"very handsome, and weighing eighteen stone. She was the picture of the Goddess Ceres, a goddess more of the earth than the heavens. Her child of fourteen months walked and talked, and was so heavy that I did not pretend to lift it." All the settlers were hospitable and friendly in a stolid, silent fashion, and less hostile to the English Government than were the irreconcilable townspeople—

"Yet all," says Lady Anne, "benefit by it, except a few monopolists. . . . The President of the Court of Justice complains that he is undone for want of fees, there being now but one bankruptcy where there used to be a hundred . . . and the hangman complains that he has nothing to do. Very flattering testimony to our Governor's jurisdiction."

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This rule, however excellent, was not destined to be a long one. The disaffected townspeople had always foreseen that the conclusion of the war would transfer them either to France or Holland; and when, on the Peace of Amiens, the Cape was restored to the Dutch, in January, 1802, Lady Anne returned to England, soon followed by her husband.

In 1808 Mr. Barnard died, and Lady Anne again took up her abode with her sister Margaret. Together they visited Scotland in 1819, and found the Dowager Countess

"more erect, more active, younger by five years than she was five years ago, and more cheerful and lively than I have seen her these twenty years. . . . To-day a chattering woman, whose conversation is endless but empty, had been here, and on her leaving, my mother said, 'I remember a line of Shakespeare's which I could easily fit to that woman's talk, if I might make a small alteration. It is

'"Nothing can come of nothing; speak again!"
'Now the alteration I wish to make is—
'"Nothing can come of nothing; hold your peace!"'
This was very pointed for eighty-two and a bad memory."

Some years before, Lady Balcarres had written to her eldest daughter—"My health is good, and what is rather laughable, I am looking, for a girl of my age, really handsome. It makes me smile, when I am complimented on my charms, to think that I cannot recollect the name of the person

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who does so." But presently she adds briskly, "I never forget a pip at whist."

When the sisters visited Lady Balcarres she was living in her old Fifeshire home, with her son Robert and his lovely wife, "guileless as one of her own babes, but with all the liberality of the great world." Robert Lindsay had bought Balcarres when his elder brother found it beyond his own means to clear the estate from incumbrance, but assured his sister that he would give Lord Balcarres the option of resuming it should fortune enable him to do so. The opportunity came, and the offer was made; but Robert heard "with transport," says Lady Anne, that Lord Balcarres had no desire to leave Haigh Hall. "Never," she exclaims, "was there a set of men so disinterested as my brothers."

In her own old home the mother of all these loving children passed her last years, with every little infirmity of temper mellowed and sweetened away by time and reflection. Her married daughters often urged her to spend the alternate years with them in England, but she would reply, "No, no, ladies—no residences but in my own country. A visit perhaps you may have from me, if I think myself well enough to go to Court and see my old flirt the King." The only change she

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ever voluntarily contemplated was the inevitable one which comes to all—when the happiness of this world was to be exchanged, as she firmly believed, for greater happiness in the next. "And then," she said to her daughter, "we shall all be young together again, Annie."

This change came at last, in November, 1820, when she was ninety-three years old, so quietly that those who were tenderly watching hardly knew when all was over. Among the last things which failing memory allowed her to repeat were two lines from the second part of "Auld Robin Gray." "Tell Annie," she said, "that,

> "'My wheel I turn round, but I come little speed,
> For my hand is grown feeble, and weak is my thread.'"

Then—the husband, sister,* and mother so ardently loved, having all gone before—Lady Anne settled in Berkeley Square, devoting herself almost entirely to completing the family memoirs on which she used to see her father so intent, and collecting the literary relics of her brothers and sisters.

"My friends press me to go out and amuse myself," she wrote. "But I should go without any interest beyond the charm of getting home again. By the side of my fire I have got into the habit of living in other days with those I loved,

* Lady Margaret died in 1814.

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reflecting on the past, hoping in the future, and sometimes looking back with a sorrowful retrospect where I fear I may have erred. Together with these mental employments I have various sources of amusement; I compile and arrange my memoranda of past observations and events. I retouch some sketches and form new ones from souvenirs taken on the spot. . . . With such entertainments for my mornings, and a house full of nephews and nieces, together with the near connections of my dear Barnard, all tenderly attached to me, I have great, great reason to bless God, who, in taking much from me, has left me so much!"

In 1825, Lady Anne Barnard died, aged seventy-four, soon after the death of her brother, Lord Balcarres. It would take a volume rather than a few pages to chronicle all the good deeds and good sayings of this one branch of the grand old house of Lindsay. It is pleasant to remember that there are still those who have inherited, with the family name, the family talents and virtues.

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# MARY AND AGNES BERRY: HORACE WALPOLE'S TWIN "WIVES."

IT is generally—and correctly—supposed that the brilliant cynic of Strawberry Hill lived and died a bachelor. But there were two charming sisters whom in later life he called his "wives," to whom his caustic pen was always gentle, for whose welfare he showed the most chivalrous consideration, and who occupied his thoughts as constantly as Stella and Vanessa did those of Swift, without their having to pay much of Stella and Vanessa's bitter penalty.

Some small portion of that penalty, indeed, fell on the sensitive and high-spirited Mary Berry, and caused her acute pain. Envious and narrow-minded people professed to see mercenary motives in the friendship of a beautiful young woman for a septuagenarian, and were contemptuously incredulous of the intellectual sympathy which united them.

As regards Horace Walpole himself, it seems possible that the suspicions of his jealous relatives



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had some foundation, and that for one brief moment he vainly urged Mary Berry to become the "wife" he loved to call her.* If so, it does them both the greater honour that his loyal devotion never failed, from that first meeting at which he "found her an angel," until, nine years later, she and her sister were the only comforters he desired by his death-bed.

Walpole's "sarcastic levity of tongue" and frequent want of charity are familiar as household words; it is only fair to see him sometimes in the cordial and sympathetic mood which he showed occasionally to some of his own family, consistently to Marshal Conway, Sir Horace Mann, and a few other friends, but most warmly to the two favourite companions of his last years.

As it is impossible to walk through the rich woods of Mapledurham without seeing in "the mind's eye" Pope loitering by the side of his

"Fair-haired Martha and Theresa brown,"

so the bowery gardens of Strawberry Hill, by the same winding Thames, are haunted by the spare form of Horace Walpole, with his keen face and observant eyes, attended by the graceful sisters—

* Miss Martineau, in her obituary notice of Mary Berry, says, "it was never any secret that the Miss Berrys had both received the offer of the hand of Horace Walpole." Lord Houghton thinks that neither did. But his opinion seems only conjectural.

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the elder "sweet, with fine dark eyes that are very lively when she speaks," and the younger—"agreeable, sensible, and almost handsome."

Mary and Agnes were the daughters of Robert Berry, who began life with "great expectations" from a maternal uncle named Ferguson—a Scotch merchant, who made £300,000, bought an estate in Fifeshire, and married Miss Townshend of Honnington Hall, but could never be persuaded to leave his gloomy house of business in Austin Friars.* Mr. Ferguson had no children, and his elder nephew, whom he sent to college, "bred to the law," and then despatched on a continental tour, was naturally regarded as his heir. But Robert displeased his uncle by marrying a portionless daughter of the Yorkshire Setons, and further disappointed him by having no sons himself, and by refusing to marry again immediately, when his beautiful young wife died in 1767, after four happy years.

"Of my mother," writes Mary Berry, "I have only the idea of having seen a tall, thin young woman in a pea-green gown, seated in a chair, seeming unwell, from whom I was sent away to play elsewhere. Of my own irreparable loss I

* For some amusing gossip about Miss Berry's ancestors, see *Temple Bar* for July, 1889, p. 368. Certainly her own account of her pedigree (on her father's side) goes no further back than Mr. Ferguson.

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never acquired a just idea till some years after, when my father told us that my mother, on hearing some one say I was a fine child, and they hoped I should be handsome, replied, 'All she prayed to Heaven for her child was that it might receive a *vigorous understanding*.' This prayer of a mother of eighteen for her first daughter impressed on my mind all I must have lost in such a parent." *

Thenceforward Mr. Ferguson chose to consider as his heir William Berry, who married a rich wife of the House of Crawford, had two sons, and was "a sharp lad with a mercantile training," altogether better suited to Austin Friars than his literary and indolent elder brother. An allowance of three hundred pounds a year was made to Robert, and

"He was allowed to sink into the state of a disinherited man, without any of the pity such a state generally inspires. While yet a mere child," writes his daughter Mary, "I suffered in spirits from the little privations his very narrow income entailed on us; every expense of education was denied us, and all the thoughtlessness of youth was lost in the continual complaints I heard and difficulties I saw. . . . From my father's disposition his children had little to hope or to depend on, for he was quite as little careful about our future prospects and success as he could ever have been about his own."

When Mary and Agnes were twelve and eleven, the extreme precocity of his elder daughter led Mr. Berry to suppose that the cost of a governess

* "Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry, 1783–1852." Edited by Lady Theresa Lewis. Longmans, 1866. Vol. i. p. 5.

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could be dispensed with, and the sisters were left to their own devices—

"To be as idle and read what books we pleased; for neither of us had the least religious education been at all thought of. It was the age of Voltaire, and his doctrines had been adopted by all the *soi-disant* Scotch wits. My dear grandmother, indeed, made me read the Psalms and chapters every morning, but as neither comment nor explanation of their history was given, I hated the duty and escaped it when I could. . . . In 1774 my grandmother took me to visit Mr. Loveday, at Caversham, Berks, an old Tory country gentleman who had married a cousin of hers. . . . He saw much of all the clergymen in his neighbourhood. At dinner the first toast was always 'Church and King;' the second, 'To the flourishing of the two Universities;' the third, 'To Maudlin College,' where he had been educated. He was an accomplished scholar, and delighted to find me apt in recalling to his mind passages from the Roman poets."

In 1781 Mr. Ferguson died, aged ninety-three. William Berry inherited £300,000 in the funds and the Scotch estate of £4000 a year, whilst Robert only received £10,000.* William then settled a thousand a year on his brother, and Robert celebrated his improved circumstances by taking his daughters for a tour in England and a long visit to the Crawfords in Rotterdam, after which they went up the Rhine to Switzerland, and thence to Italy. From this period Mary Berry

* When the will was read the chief executor asked Robert Berry *if he thought his share too much!*

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dates the awakening of her mind and the formation of her character.

"I felt my understanding and imagination increase every day," she says, "but I soon found that I had to lead those who ought to have led me; that I must be a protecting mother instead of a gay companion to my sister, and to my father a guide and monitor, instead of finding in him a tutor and protector."

One cannot but suspect that the melancholy temperament, of which Miss Berry makes frequent and full confession, led her to exaggerate the disadvantages of her early years—or at all events their lasting effects; for her success when she did enter society was marked and instantaneous. She and her sister were amongst the few English women who, without superlative rank, beauty, intellect, or wealth, held a salon to which the possessors of these advantages constantly crowded. For half a century they knew every one best worth knowing, and they had that sympathetic charm which creates reputations amongst contemporaries more difficult than any others to convey or explain to posterity.

While in Rome, where they arrived in November, 1783, the Berrys went to see the Pope celebrate a High Mass, at which the Emperor Joseph (son of Maria Theresa) and the unfortunate Gustavus III. of Sweden were also spectators, and which

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Mary, with a touch of the Voltairianism she deprecated, calls "the grandest and best acted pantomime that can be imagined." They were presented to the Pope (Pius VI.), and to the Duchess of Parma (a sister of Marie Antoinette), whom they found "tall, well-made, like the Emperor, but not near so well-looking, ill and oddly-dressed, rather masculine in her voice and manner, with a considerable degree of hauteur." Nelson's Caroline, Queen of Naples, on the other hand, another daughter of "King Maria Theresa," was "very gracious in her manner, and very ready at the necessary conversation."

The King of Sweden became friendly with the Berrys, accompanying them on several of their excursions, and showing himself an excellent traveller, always good-humoured and regardless of bad weather. They "did" everything, whilst in Italy, with most praiseworthy energy—picture galleries, ruins, churches, Herculaneum, and Vesuvius; besides the reigning royalties, they became acquainted with the eclipsed greatness of Madame D'Albany; with Madame de Staël,* then

* "From our great acquaintance in Italy with the King of Sweden, we became very intimate with his ambassador in Paris, M. de Staël. He spoke to me in all confidence about his intended marriage with Mademoiselle Necker, asked my opinion, and consulted me on the subject. But the match was already settled." [By the intervention, it was said, of Marie Antoinette.]—"Journal," vol. i. p. 147.

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Mademoiselle Necker, sixteen years old, and "much neglected by the young English from the boldness of her manners," and with General O'Hara—the most important introduction of all, as regarded Mary's future happiness.

While at Naples they were much amused by two ballets at the Festino. In the first Queen Caroline appeared as Ceres, attended by Minerva, Mars, and some groups of peasants, who united in handing up to the King of Sweden's box, on the point of a spear, wreaths of artificial flowers bearing the inscriptions, "Au Sauveur de sa Patrie;" "Au Protecteur des Beaux-Arts;" "À l'Alliance perpétuelle." After supper the Kings of Sweden and Naples, sixteen gentlemen and six bears, represented "The Hunters of Lapland." "Their dresses," writes Miss Berry, "were elegant and characteristic, and both *kings*, *men*, and *bears* performed their parts admirably." They concluded by handing up to the Queen in her box some garlands of flowers and a parcel of Swedish gloves.

In 1785 the Berrys returned to England, and three years later they took a house at Twickenham.

"If I have picked up no recent anecdotes on our common," writes Walpole to Lady Ossory in October, 1788, "I have

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made a much more precious acquisition. It is the acquaintance of two young ladies named Berry. . . . They were carried by their father for two or three years to France and Italy, and have returned the best informed and the most perfect creatures I ever saw at their age. They are exceedingly sensible, entirely natural and unaffected, frank, and qualified to talk on any subject. The elder, I discovered by chance, understands Latin, and is a perfect Frenchwoman in her language. The younger draws charmingly. . . . She is less animated than Mary, and seems, out of deference to her sister, to speak seldomer, for they dote on each other, and Mary is always praising her sister's talents. I must even tell you they dress within the bounds of fashion, though fashionably, without the excrescences and balconies with which modern hoydens overwhelm their persons. The first night I met them I would not be acquainted with them, having heard so much in their praise that I concluded they would be all pretension. Now, I do not know which I like best, except Mary's face, which is formed for a sentimental novel, but ten times better for a fifty times better thing—genteel comedy. This delightful family comes to me almost every Sunday evening. . . . I forgot to tell you that Mr. Berry is a little merry man with a round face. . . . If your ladyship insists on hearing the humours of my district, you must indulge me with sending you two pearls I found in my path." *

Even in the first of the series of published letters addressed by Walpole to the sisters, as in nearly all its successors, may be traced, says Lady Theresa Lewis—

"The constant struggle in his mind between the tenderness with which he dwells on the pleasure of their society, and the fear of its expression making him ridiculous."

* "Letters of Horace Walpole," edited by Peter Cunningham. Vol. ix. p. 153.

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He concludes his letter thus:

"If two negatives make an affirmative, why may not two ridicules compose one piece of sense? and therefore, as I am in love with you both, I trust it is a proof of the good sense of your devoted—H. WALPOLE."

A little later he writes:

"You have not half the quickness that I thought you had, or, which is much more probable, I suspect that I am a little in love and you are not, for I think I should have understood *you* in two syllables, which has not been your case. I had sealed my note, and was going to send it, when yours arrived with the invitation for Saturday. I had not time to break open my note, and so lifted up a corner and squeezed in *I will*. What could those syllables mean, but that I will do whatever you please? Yes, you may keep them as a note of hand, always payable at sight of your commands—or your sister's. For I am not less in love with my wife Rachel than my wife Leah; and though I had a little forgotten my matrimonial vows at the beginning of this note, and haggled a little about owning my passion, now I recollect that I have taken a double dose, I am mighty proud of it. And being more in the right than ever lover was, and twice as much in the right too, I avow my sentiments *hardiment*, and am—'HYMEN, O HYMENÆE!'"

This intimacy now often determined the residence of the Berrys, and materially influenced their life. "His friends became their friends, and his neighbours their neighbours." Walpole took the warmest interest in all their plans, and forwarded all their wishes—provided they did not point to any lengthened separation from himself. "I pray that our papa may find a house at Twickenham,"

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he writes; "Hampton Court is halfway to Switzerland." When they left London, in 1789, for a Yorkshire visit, he was in despair:

"I passed so many evenings of the last fortnight with you that I almost preferred it to our two honeymoons, and am the more sensible to the deprivation. And how dismal was *Sunday* evening compared to those of last autumn! If you both felt as I do, we might surpass *any* event in the annals of Dunmow. Oh, what a prodigy it would be if a husband and *two* wives should present themselves and demand the 'Flitch of Bacon,' swearing that not one of the three in a year and a day wished to be unmarried!" *

The sisters had promised to write to him whilst on their journey; but he did not hear from them so soon as he had hoped, and the day after writing of the Flitch of Bacon, he resumes:

"No letter to-day. . . . You see I think of *you*, and write every day, though I cannot despatch my letter till you have sent me a direction. Miss Agnes was not so flippant in promising me letters; but I do trust she *will* write, and then, Madam, she and I will go to Dunmow without you. *Thursday night.*

'Despairing beside a clear stream,
A shepherd forsaken was laid.'

Not very close to the stream, but within doors in sight of it. In this damp weather a lame old Colin cannot lie and despair with any comfort on a wet bank. . . . I wish Friday was come! *26th.* Still I have no letter; you cannot all three be ill, and if any one is I should flatter myself another would have written. . . . Jealous I am not, for two young ladies cannot have run away with their father to Gretna

* "Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry," vol. i. p. 461.

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Green. . . . *Saturday.* At last I have got a letter, and you are all well! I am so pleased that I forget the four uneasy days I have passed. I have neither time nor paper to say more, for our post turns on its heel and goes out the instant it has come in. Do not be frightened at the enormity of this, I shall not continue so four paginous in every letter. . . . Pray present my duty to grandmamma, and let her know what a promising young grandson she has got."

Sometimes, but very seldom, Walpole hardens his heart to scold his charming correspondents; but then he was only keeping a promise.

"If I discover a fault you shall hear of it," he wrote in an early letter. "You came too perfect in my hands, to let you be spoilt by indulgence. All the world admires you, yet you have contracted no vanity, but are simple and good as Nature made you. Mind, *you* and *yours* are always, from my lips and pen, what grammarians call the *common of two*, and signify *both*." *

Accordingly he keeps a sharp watch over their culture, and declares:

"If you grow tired of the 'Arabian Nights,' you have no more taste than Bishop Atterbury, who huffed Pope for sending him them, and fancied he liked Virgil better, who had no more imagination than Dr. Akenside. Read Sinbad the Sailor's Voyages, and you will be sick of Æneas's. . . . I do not know whether the 'Arabian Nights' are of Oriental origin or not; I should think not, because I never saw any other Oriental composition that was not bombastic without

* In the letters prepared for the press by Miss Berry many of the more eulogistic passages were omitted; they were replaced by Lady Theresa Lewis after her death, and it will be understood that the extracts made here are from Miss Berry's "Journals and Correspondence" when not otherwise distinguished.

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genius, and figurative without nature. Like an Indian screen, where you see little men in the foreground, and larger men hunting tigers above in the air, which they take for perspective." *

Sometimes he tries to excite their jealousy:

"Such unwriting wives I never knew! And a shame it is for an author, and what is more, a printer, to have a *couple* so unlettered. I can find time amidst all the hurry of my shop to write small quartos to them continually. In France, where nuptiality is not the virtue most in request, a wife *will* write to her consort, though the *doux billet* should contain but two sentences, for which I will give you a precedent. A lady sent the following to her spouse: 'Je vous écris, parceque je n'ai rien à faire; et je finis, parceque je n'ai rien à vous dire.' I don't wish for quite so laconic a 'poulet;' besides, your ladyships *can* write. Mrs. Damer dined here yesterday, and had just heard from you. Brevity, mesdames, may be catching. . . . If I were not a man of honour, though a printer, and had not promised you 'Bonner's Ghost,' † I would be as silent *as if I were in Yorkshire.* Remember, too, that Miss Hannah More, though not so proper for the French Ambassador's Fête as Miss Gunning, can teach Greek and Latin as well as any young lady in the north of England, and might make as suitable a companion for a typographer."

At last he hears that the Berry family are coming back, and is all anxiety to find an adjacent house for them.

"If the worst comes to the worst, I can secure you a house at Teddington, more agreeable than that at Bushy; at least, *more agreeable to my Lord Castlecomer*, for it is nearer

* "Letters of Horace Walpole," vol ix. p. 184.

† A poem by Hannah More, which Walpole greatly admired, and printed at the Strawberry Hill Press.

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to me by half. That proverb I must explain to you for your future use. There was an old Lady Castlecomer who had an only son, and he had a tutor, who happened to break his leg. A visitor lamented the accident to her ladyship. The old Rock replied, 'Yes, indeed, it is very inconvenient to my Lord Castlecomer.' This saying was adopted forty years ago into the phraseology of Strawberry, and is very expressive of the selfish apathy towards others which refers everything to its own centre."

His negotiations were ratified, and he says:

"I jumped for joy; that is, my heart did, which is all that remains of me *in statu jumpante*, at the news that you approve of the house at Teddington. . . . You ask how you have deserved such kind attentions? Why, *by* deserving them. By every kind of merit, and by that superlative one to me, your consenting to throw away so much time on a forlorn antique; you, too, who without specifying particulars (and you must at least be conscious that you are not two frights) might expect any fortunes and distinctions, and do delight all companies."

In 1790 Mr. Berry and his daughters resolved to revisit the continent, and Horace Walpole, who had been watching the progress of the French Revolution with a horror intensified by his personal regard for many of its victims, felt alarm as well as regret, and vainly endeavoured to shake their purpose. In October they left England, and in a letter dated "The day of your departure," Walpole wrote:

"In happy days I smiled and called you *my dear wives*—now I can only think on you as darling children, of whom I am bereaved. As such I have loved, and do love you, and

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charming as you are, I have had no occasion to remind myself that I am past seventy-three. . . . If I live to see you again you will then judge whether I am changed; but a friendship so rational as mine is, and so equal for both, is not likely to have any of the fickleness of youth."

The travellers only spent two days in Paris, which they found "much in *déshabille*." But they managed to see the foundations of the Bastille dug up by the mob, and to visit the National Assembly—"such a set of shabby, ill-dressed, strange-looking people I hardly ever saw together," writes Mary—where they could hear nothing for the general hubbub.

Walpole's relief was great when he heard of their safe arrival in Italy; for them he revived his early recollections, urging them to see and to enjoy everything most worth the seeing, but frankly admitting that he would not really know an easy moment until they had again crossed the Channel,* and fretting at the breaks in their correspondence, unavoidable in such a troubled time. "If I to-day say, 'How do you do?' it will be one or two and forty days before you answer, 'Very well, thank you.'" Nevertheless, he was careful to amuse them with all the "talk of the

* "Precious as our insular situation is, I am ready to wish with the Frenchman that you could somehow or other get to it by land: 'Oui, c'est un isle toujours, je le sçais bien. Mais, par exemple, en allant d'alentour, n'y auroit-il pas moyen d'y arriver par terre?'"

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town:" the many romantic inventions connected with the Gunning marriages; the arrival of Sheridan at Isleworth, where he had taken a house at £400 a year, on being expelled from Bruton Street by an unpaid and indignant landlord; and the approaching marriage of the Duke of York, which the Duke of Clarence called at Strawberry Hill to announce. "I asked the page at what hour it would be proper to call on him and thank him. He answered, 'Between ten and eleven!' Mercy on me, to be dressed and at Petersham before eleven!"

While in Turin the Berrys met the Duc de Bourbon *—"a civil, good-humoured, gentlemanlike, stupid man." At a royal hunting party they saw a noticeable group: Victor Amadeus III., who rode up to speak to the friend with whom they were driving, and was then

"a very gentlemanlike old man, easy and dignified in his manner. The Prince de Piedmont is the oddest, ugliest-looking being I ever beheld; *il abuse du privilège non-seulement comme les hommes, mais les princes, d'être laids.* They say he has a great deal of natural wit, penetration, and cleverness. The Prince de Carignan is grown a great awkward, ill-looking young man; the Comte d'Artois a great deal fatter and better-looking than when we saw him in Paris; his two sons (Duc d'Angoulême and Duc de Berri),

* The father of the ill-fated Duc d'Enghien. He was living in England at the time of his son's execution, but returned to France in 1814, and hanged himself in his Château de St. Leu in 1830.

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charming, pretty boys, on horseback. They were all in *uniforme de chasse*, red, faced with blue, and a broad silver lace. Ugly in itself, but gay and pretty in the field."

Throughout this correspondence Walpole's freshness of feeling and his capacity for enthusiasm are remarkable in one of his varied, and in many respects disenchanting, experience. When "his clock has struck seventy-four," he can still write:

"I went with General Conway, on Wednesday morning, to visit one of my antediluvian passions—not a Statira or a Roxana, but one pre-existent to myself—one Windsor Castle. And I was so delighted, and so juvenile, that without attending to anything but my eyes, I stood full two hours and a half, and found that half my lameness consists in my indolence. Two Berrys, a Gothic chapel and an historic castle are anodynes to a torpid mind. I now fancy that old age was invented by the lazy. St. George's Chapel, that I always worshipped, though so dark that I could see nothing distinctly, is now being cleaned and decorated—a scene of lightness and grace."*

The winter of 1790–91 was spent by the Berrys alternately at Florence and Pisa. Walpole's letters show an evident struggle to bear this absence patiently and cheerfully; but on hearing from Mrs. Damer (the beautiful sculptress, daughter of Marshal Conway, an idol in the Strawberry Hill circle, and a favourite with Walpole from her earliest childhood) that they may possibly remain

* "Letters of Horace Walpole," vol. ix. p. 356.



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abroad during another winter, he thinks that they have not been frank to him, and all his philosophy deserts him.

"I am forced, for my own peace," he writes, "to beseech you not to continue a manœuvre that only tantalizes and wounds me. In your last you put together many friendly words to give me hope of your return; but can I be so blind as not to see that they are vague words? . . . In fact, I have for some time seen how little you mean it, and, for your sakes, I cease to desire it."

Then he finds how deeply this reproach wounds his friends, and is impulsively and pathetically penitent:

"I am returned, and find the only letter I dreaded, and the only one I trust that I shall ever not be impatient to receive from you. Though ten thousand times kinder than I deserve, it wounds my heart, as I find that I hurt two of the persons I love the best upon earth, and whom I am most constantly studying to please and serve. That I soon repented of my murmurs you have seen by my subsequent letters. The truth, as you may have perceived, though no excuse, was that I had thought myself dying, and that I should never see you more. . . . Yet I do not in the least excuse my conduct. No, I condemn it in every light, and shall never forgive myself if you do not promise me to be guided entirely by your own convenience and inclinations about your return."

In September the homeward journey began, and Walpole followed every stage of their progress on a map, delighting to "drive on with his pen" towards home. He had bought for them a

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neighbouring house, once occupied by Kitty Clive, which he sometimes called "Cliveden," and sometimes "Little Strawberry," and took the greatest pleasure in preparing for their return.

"To *that day*," he writes, "I own that I look with an eagerness of impatience that no words can convey, unless they could paint the pulse of fifteen when it has been promised some untasted joy for which it had long hoped and been denied."

In the December following the return of the Berrys, the third Earl of Orford died, and the title, with "a small estate loaded with debt," devolved on his uncle, Horace Walpole. Gossip, of course, became more busy than ever with his name; and his anxiety for the society of his friends, and the steps he took to establish them near him, were made the subject of a newspaper attack.

"Would to God we had remained abroad!" wrote Mary Berry, in her distress and indignation, "where we might still have enjoyed as much of your confidence and friendship as ignorance and impertinence seem likely to allow us here!"

Adding that the possession of Cliveden would be only a source of pain to her if the world considered it the reward of her attentions to her friend.

Lord Orford's reply was an agitated remonstrance:

"MY DEAREST ANGEL,—Now I read your note it breaks my heart! . . . My nephew's death has already brought

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a load upon me that I have not strength to bear. . . . I shall want but your uneasiness to finish me. You know I scarce wish to live but to carry you to Cliveden! . . . Are our consciences no shield against anonymous folly or envy? Would you only condescend to be my friend if I were a beggar? The Duchess of Gloucester,* when she heard my intention about Cliveden, came and commended me much for doing some little justice to injured merit. For your own sake, for poor mine, combat such extravagant delicacy, and do not poison the few days of a life which you, and you only, can sweeten."

The Berrys yielded to his persuasions, and took up their abode at "Little Strawberry," and he acknowledges in his next letter that the obligation is all on his side, as the sisters sacrificed their pride to his wish to serve them and to keep them near him. Mr. Berry would appear to have been passive throughout the whole transaction.

Whenever his friends were away from "Little Strawberry," Lord Orford wrote to them almost daily. The following passage should be taken to heart by all those provoking correspondents who excuse their silence by alleging want of "news":

"Don't talk of sending me letters not worth a farthing. What are any letters worth but according to the person from whom they come? Do you think that if I had expected last week one of the best letters Madame de Sévigné ever wrote, I should have been wretched for two days because it had not arrived? Pooh! Don't tell me of letters not worth

* His niece Maria, married to a brother of George III.

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a farthing—let me but have those I desire, and leave it to me to see the value of them!"

Lord Orford went to "Little Strawberry" during its mistresses' absence in Yorkshire, and found "a grove of lavender plants," which Mrs. Damer had sent there.

"They brought to my recollection," he says, "the tag of an old song that I learnt in my first babyhood, that I am sure has not been in my head these threescore years and ten, but suits incomparably with my second infancy:

'Rosemary's green, diddle diddle, lavender's blue,
If you'll love me, diddle diddle, I will love you!'

I have a true regard for nonsense, on which I have lived man and boy for longer than I will say. But as you are worthy of better food, I had rather have something to tell you that you would care to read."

During the absence of the Berrys, Lord Orford received a royal visitor.

"The Duchess of York [daughter of the King of Prussia] arrived punctually at twelve, in a high phaeton, with Mrs. Ewert and Bude on horseback. I received the Princess at the side of her chaise, and when she entered kissed her hand. She meant to ride, but had hurt her foot, and was forced to sit most of the time she was here. We had many civil contests about my sitting too, but I resisted, and then she commanded General Bude to sit, that I might have no excuse. She seemed much pleased and commended much, and I can do no less of her, with the strictest truth. She is not near so small as I expected; her face is very agreeable and lively, and she is so good-humoured, and so gracious, and so natural, that I do not believe Lady Mary Coke *

* Who, according to Miss Berry, had "fancied herself" in love with the former Duke of York, George III.'s brother, and "fancied" they were privately married.

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would have made a quarter so pleasing a Duchess of York nor have been in half so sweet a temper, unless by my attentions *de vieille cour*. . . . To-morrow I shall go to Oatlands with my thanks for the honour; and there, probably, will end my connection with Courts, begun with George I., great-great-great-grandfather to the Duchess of York! It sounds as if there could not have been above three generations more before Adam!" *

Although Mary Berry was evidently foremost in Lord Orford's thoughts, he wrote often and affectionately to her more reserved and shyer sister, with whose artistic pursuits he had great sympathy:

"The longer I know you, my sweet Agnes, the more I find new reasons for loving you, as I do most cordially. You threatened not to write, and I have already received a charming letter from you—and now, as you never disimprove, I am confident you will let me hear from you some-

* The Duchess of York was a somewhat eccentric woman, original and intelligent, fond of the society of literary men, and often mentioned by Rogers, Raikes, Monk Lewis, &c. Walpole tells a characteristic story of her in a letter to Conway: "The Duchess of York gave a great entertainment at Oatlands on her Duke's birthday, sent to his tradesmen in town to come to it, and allowed two guineas apiece to each for their carriage, gave them a dance, and opened the ball herself with the Prince of Wales. A company of strollers came to Weybridge to act in a barn; she was solicited to go to it, and did out of charity, and carried all her servants. Next day a Methodist came to preach a charity sermon in the same theatre, and she consented to hear it from the same motive; but her servants desired to be excused, not understanding English. 'Oh,' said the Duchess, 'but you went to the comedy, which you understood less, and you shall go to the sermon.' To which she gave handsomely, and for them. I like this." ("Letters," vol. ix. p. 386.)

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times, though I will not be exacting nor expect you to do what you do not love, especially as I shall hear accounts of you from Mary."

Lord Orford's letters are a series of pictures of the past; and exceedingly odd pictures some of them are, showing, more clearly than volumes of moralizing, the change which has happily come over the spirit of the time.

"It was printed at the bottom of the Richmond playbills last week," he writes, "that Mrs. Jordan would not perform, as it was the birthday of H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence No, to be sure she would not, for the Prince of Orange," then living at Hampton Court Palace, "was to dine with him, and she did the honours at the head of the table. No, the Princesses were not there."

Scattered through these letters are frequent allusions to the handsome and gallant General O'Hara, who first met the Berrys at Naples in 1784, and whose adventurous career and personal fascination interested all the Strawberry Hill circle. He had been wounded and taken prisoner at the siege of Toulon, and was released just before the sisters visited Cheltenham.

"I am delighted," writes Lord Orford, "that you have got O'Hara. How he must feel his felicity in being at liberty to roam about as much as he likes! Still, I shall not admire his volatility if he quits you soon."

This was very kind and generous; but the time was rapidly approaching when Lord Orford's

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point of view somewhat changed. During this Cheltenham visit General O'Hara proposed to Mary Berry and was accepted; and, however frequently and sincerely Lord Orford assured himself and others that his love for Mary and Agnes was quite "grandfatherly," yet even grandfathers have been known to show some jealousy when their children form closer ties, and it is certain that the news of the engagement was painful to him. Probably, too, it was chiefly out of regard for the feelings and the fragile health of this devoted friend that Miss Berry made the sacrifice which cast a deep shadow over the rest of her life. Immediately after returning from Cheltenham, O'Hara was appointed Governor of Gibraltar, and urged Mary to marry and accompany him. She refused, saying, "I *think* I am doing right. I am sure I am consulting the peace and happiness of those about me, and not my own:" but the final result of this refusal was that her engagement was broken off early in April, 1796. In 1844 Mary wrote as follows:

"This parcel of letters [O'Hara's] relates to the six happiest months of my long existence, when I looked forward to a future which I felt, for the first time, would have called out all the powers of my mind and all the warmest feelings of my heart. . . . Letters lost and delayed, certainty of meeting more difficult, questions unanswered, doubts unsatis-

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fied—all these circumstances combined in the most unlucky manner crushed the fair fabric of my happiness, while for long I could not banish a hope that all might yet be set right. And so it would had we ever met for twenty-four hours. But he remained at Gibraltar until his death in 1802. And I, forty-two years afterwards, on opening these papers which had been sealed up ever since, receive the conviction that some feelings in some minds are indelible."

It must have greatly added to the pain of Miss Berry's broken engagement, that the friend for whose sake the sacrifice was chiefly made had but little time remaining in which to enjoy the companionship so preserved to him. In July Lord Orford wrote to her:

"I find that my memory fails in a very novel manner. I moult many of my letters. My words look like Hebrew without points. I do not recover my walking at all. In short, I advance to what I have foretold, that I should have nothing but my inside left, and then I shall be but an odd figure. Having nothing better to talk of than my ruins, I shall not make my despatches tedious. It will be trouble enough merely to read them. Adieu."

Very few letters from him are included in Miss Berry's correspondence. His infirmities rapidly increased, and he became such a martyr to the gout that in December he removed to Berkeley Square for further medical advice, where, in March of the following year, he died—attended during every waking hour by the two sisters, but unhappily believing himself neglected and abandoned by them if he missed them for a moment.

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By Lord Orford's will, Little Strawberry Hill was left to Mary and Agnes Berry, and a box of manuscripts to them and their father, who was instructed to issue a new edition of his works, including the papers bequeathed to Mr. Berry and his daughters.* The literary work, however, fell on Mary Berry, as all the work of life had done, and for more than a year she devoted herself to it, finding in incessant occupation the best solace for the loneliness which followed the loss of her lover and of her enthusiastic and faithful friend.†

How she must have missed Walpole it is easy to conceive. The very exactions of extreme affection form a bond which the easy-going kindliness of acquaintanceship is powerless to replace; and the liberty which follows the cessation of a labour of love is a cold and mournful freedom.

After Lord Orford's death, many friends, clever and appreciative, still surrounded the sisters; and Mary Berry's correspondence grew more varied, as her daily life also did, since, whether

* The new edition appeared in 1798, in five quarto volumes, with no editor's name.

† Not in mental occupation only. "I have been as busy as a bee," she writes, "in my garden and greenhouse, to which I always return with new pleasure and satisfaction, convinced that when one likes and enters into it, it is one of the very best sources of interest and amusement. There is nothing that so agreeably fatigues the body and rests the mind." How many aching hearts have tried to bury part of their sorrows in a garden!

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present or absent, he had absorbed a large proportion of her time.

In November, 1799, in the opera box of the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, Miss Berry first heard of the deposition of the Council of the Five Hundred, and her comments are amusing:

"For my part I think it will be better dealing with *one* or even with *three* rogues than with five hundred; but it will, in all probability, shortly end in Bonaparte's assassination; for in a country where every man thinks himself equally able and equally fit to govern, the government of one must ever be looked upon with invidious eyes."

Her unusually dispassionate and unprejudiced mind, however, in spite of its aristocratic predilections, soon saw the merits of the Consulate.

"What think you of the *Man Bonaparte*, absolute King of France, quietly established at the Tuileries?" she asks in 1800. "For my part I admire him, and think, if he can keep his place, he does his country a service. Nothing ever gave me so desperate an opinion of our ministers and their yet more desperate projects as the daily abuse in the ministerial and *soi-disant* impartial papers of Bonaparte and the new order of things. . . . If the nation is once in a state to maintain the relations of peace and the conditions of treaties, what *have* we, what *ought* we to have, to do with the means? I confess that, as a citizen of enlightened Europe, after all the tyrannies under which the French have laboured, I should really be sorry to see them return to their old original worn-out tyranny under the Bourbons. For slaves I am convinced they can alone be fit, till their many stains, contracted in the *fange* of the despotism in which they were born and bred, have been washed out and

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purified by a purgatory of I know not how many revolutions; but to return so soon, and after such dreadful convulsions, to the point from whence they set out, even I don't wish them."

Two years later she went to see for herself the state of things in Paris, where she renewed her acquaintance with Madame de Staël, and made that of Fouché, Berthier, Cambacérès, La Fayette, and many other celebrities, none of whom impressed her very favourably; but she found it "excessively entertaining to see a number of persons whose names one has been reading in newspapers these last ten years." Mrs. Cosway, the artist, presented Miss Berry, Agnes, and Mrs. Damer, who travelled with them, to Letitia Bonaparte.

"A woman turned fifty, with large dark eyes, an intelligent, mild countenance, and great remains of having been very handsome. She has a civil, quiet manner, but no particular cleverness in her conversation. She is said to be in all the height of Swedenborgism, or what used to be called *quietism* here. Her son when she is ill comes to see her, has lodged her well, takes good care of her, and I fancy has little more to do with her. She endeavours, I believe, to protect the quondam convents of women and their attendant priests in the conquered countries."

A Swiss tailor, patronised by Joséphine, offered to obtain an interview with her for the English ladies. They met him at the Tuileries, and he led them through a waiting-room in which there were two or three little black pages and a mame-

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luke in Turkish dress, to the door of Joséphine's dressing-room, where she met them, and the tailor disappeared.

"She crossed the room to the chairs that were ranged along the wall, and sitting down first herself, begged us to be seated also. She is a thin, dark, very genteel-looking woman, about the size of and not unlike Lady Elizabeth Foster,* but with a more sensible and less *minaudière* countenance. In her manners, without assuming those of a queen, she unites much protection and dignity with much civility. I think *elle se tire d'affaire* (and it is no easy matter) very cleverly."

A reception at the Tuileries followed the less formal interview in Joséphine's dressing-room:

"There was a range of *chaises à dos* placed round the yellow salon, upon which the ladies were invited to sit down, by Mme. de Luçay; the men remained in a *peloton* before the window at the bottom of the room. Bonaparte and Madame entered at the same time from the door of the bed-chamber. He went regularly round, speaking to every lady for two or three minutes, M. de Luçay, the Préfêt, having a paper in his hand containing the name and nation of each lady, which he announced to Bonaparte as he approached her. His manner and address is very simple and unaffected. He asked one lady if she could ride on horseback, another if she had been long in France. To the Italians he spoke in Italian, saying much the same sort of royal nothings. My turn happening to come before Mrs. Damer's, he asked me if I had been long in Paris: 'Plus de trois semaines.' 'Comment trouvez-vous l'Opéra?' 'Oh,

* Daughter of Frederick Hervey, Earl of Bristol, Walpole's "Right Ir-Reverend Bishop of Derry," and second wife of the fifth Duke of Devonshire.

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bien beau, mais nous avons tant vu l'Opéra.' He seemed to feel by my answer that he might have addressed us better, but totally ignorant of who we were, he knew not how to change the subject, and continued it with Mrs. Damer, by asking, 'Si nous avions d'aussi bons danseurs en Angleterre?' 'Oh, non, nous en faisons venir d'ici.' 'Cependant vous avez une bien belle voix, c'est Mme. Billington, je l'ai entendue en Italie.' 'Oui, assurément, elle a une très belle voix, et c'est une Anglaise.' 'Oui, mais elle a épousé un Français' [her second husband, M. Felessart] 'et étudié en Italie, de manière qu'elle appartient aux trois nations.' And so he passed on to the next person, a Russian, with the same royal inquiry, 'si elle montait à cheval,' which put me laughingly in mind of the '*Do you get out?*' of St. James's. One could not but regret that Mrs. Damer's talents had never reached his ears, nor the principal object of our journey to Paris,* or he would certainly have addressed us on some other subject and left the opera for younger women. While he was going round the circle Mme. Bonaparte followed him, always leaving two or three persons between them. She, in turn, spoke to everybody. . . . She did not gain so much as I expected by being more dressed. She wore a pink silk gown with velvet spots, a small white satin hat with three feathers, tied under the chin, a handkerchief in her hand, and no fan. Bonaparte was in undress consular uniform. His hair is very dark, and does not lie smoothly on his head. He by no means struck me as so little as he appeared on horseback. His shoulders are broad, his complexion pale-yellow. His mouth has a remarkable and uncommon expression of sweetness. Indeed his whole countenance was more that of complacence and quiet intelligence than of decided penetration and strong expression. The man of the parade and the man of the circle left totally different impressions on my mind; his

* To offer the First Consul a bust of Charles James Fox, by Mrs. Damer, graciously received some years later.

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eyes are light grey, and he looks full in the face of the person to whom he speaks—to me always a good sign. Yet after all I have said of the sweetness of his countenance, I can readily believe that it is terrible and fire-darting when angry."

Miss Berry returned to London in April, 1803, and in May her comedy of *Fashionable Friends*, which had been very successful when privately performed at Strawberry Hill, was produced at Drury Lane only to be withdrawn in three nights, although Kemble, Mrs. Jordan, and Miss Pope, well supported by other popular favourites, appeared in it. The authorship was carefully concealed, except from Miss Berry's most intimate friends, and, judging from Lady Theresa Lewis's description of the play, it deserved its fate. Nevertheless, Professor Playfair, a little blinded perhaps by his warm friendship for the beautiful dramatist, paid her a graceful compliment on it.

In 1809, at the christening party of the son of "Anastatius" Hope, the Princess of Wales, who was godmother, desired Lady Sheffield to present Miss Berry to her.

"I don't think she was taken with me," writes Miss Berry "as she saw, when I did not suppose she did, the *moue* I made to Lady Sheffield when she first proposed it to me, which I changed for a proper Court face when I found her looking at me and the thing inevitable. The last dance before supper she danced with Lord Lyttelton. Such

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an exhibition! Such an overdressed, painted, eyebrowed figure one never saw! G. Robinson said she was the only true friend the Prince of Wales had, as she went about justifying his conduct."

The Princess made a more favourable impression on a quiet visit to Strawberry Hill, then occupied by Mrs. Damer:

"She was in her very best manner, and her conversation is certainly uncommonly lively, odd, and clever.* What a pity that she has not a grain of *common* sense! not an ounce of ballast to prevent high spirits and a coarse mind allowing her to act indecorously and ridiculously whenever an occasion offers. Were she always to conduct herself as she did here to-day, she would be credited with a remarkably easy and gracious manner, and natural cleverness above any of her *peers* that I have seen."

The good opinion seems to have been mutual, for after this the diary records many receptions, dinners, and evening-parties at Kensington Palace, where the Princess of Wales was living. Sometimes the manifestations of friendship must have been inconvenient, for the Princess would keep Miss Berry walking up and down in the moonlight till one o'clock in the morning, pouring forth histories of her past life and present troubles. Lady Donegal, in one of her lively letters to Moore, describes some of the penalties paid for the honour of this acquaintance:

* This enables one better to understand Scott's finding her "fascinating."

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"The Pantiles" [Tunbridge Wells] "were put into an uproar last Tuesday by the arrival of the Princess of Wales on a visit to the Berrys. She brought Lady C. Campbell and Mrs. and Miss Rawdon with her, but not a man did she bring, nor could she get here for love or money, except Sir Philip Francis and old Berry, who, egad, liked the fun of gallanting her about, and enjoyed himself more than the fair daughters did, who were in a grand fuss, and were forsaken in their utmost need by beaux their former suppers fed, and had to amuse her, as well as they could, with the help of a few women that she did not care about." *

The Prince Regent of course disapproved of this friendly intercourse.

"Went to Lady Hertford's," writes Miss Berry. "The Regent came soon afterwards. . . . He looked wretchedly swollen up, with a muddled complexion, and was extremely tipsy—gravely and cautiously so. I happened to be a good while in the circle, and he at last gave me a formal bow, with *Kensington* legible on it."

In 1810 Miss Berry edited and annotated an edition of Madame du Deffand's Letters (bequeathed to Horace Walpole), which was very well received, and extended her already wide circle of literary friends, amongst whom Joanna Baillie, Scott, and Rogers had long been prominent. When Byron was first added to the list she was much attracted by him, but she soon wrote, "He is a singular man, pleasant to me, but I very much fear that his head begins to be turned by all the adoration of the world, especially the women." Campbell,

* "Memoirs of Thomas Moore," vol. viii. p. 118.



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who struck her as conceited, she did not like at all.

The acquaintance begun with Mademoiselle Necker ripened into friendship with Madame de Staël, of whom Miss Berry saw a great deal during her visit to England in 1813–14. When news reached her that the Allies had entered Paris she was deeply moved, but Miss Berry distrusted the eloquently expressed distress.

"Emotion is not what she excites nor what she feels (except momentarily). She does not dwell long enough upon anything. Life, characters, and even feelings pass before her eyes like a magic lantern ; she runs through the world to see all, to hear all, and to say all—to excite herself, and to give it all back to the world, and the society from which she has drawn it."

And when Madame de Staël returned to France, Miss Berry wrote to Mrs. Damer—"While *I* am regretting *her*, she will never think more of *me* till we meet again." But in this she was mistaken, for Madame de Staël afterwards described her to a friend as "by *far* the cleverest woman in England, and the one she loved best."

In 1816 Miss Berry visited Lady Hardwicke in Paris, where her husband was then ambassador, and frequently met Talleyrand—"such a mass of moral and physical corruption!"—and the Duke of Wellington :

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"The simplicity and frankness of his manners, and the way in which he speaks of public affairs, are really those of a great man, although, talking of the Allied Sovereigns, their views, &c., he says *we* found so-and-so, *we* intend such-and-such things, quite as treating *de couronne à couronne.* I diverted him much with Benjamin Constant's idea of his never returning to *l'état de simple citoyen.* . . . In answer to a number of women's questions as to what exultation he felt at the victory, and what grief for the fall of friends at Waterloo, he replied in his usual unaffected manner, he had little time to feel either until long after all was over—'*I who saw the battle four times lost that day.*'"

In 1817 the Berrys went to Genoa, described by Mary to Madame de Staël as a place which, differently peopled, would be "an earthly paradise." But she adds:

"To pass one's life without books—for there are none to be found here—and without conversation—for it is unknown here—is an intellectual and moral fast which weakens me morally, and influences painfully my physical well-being."

She seems, however, to have struggled successfully against this mental isolation, for Professor Playfair writes to her that, according to Lord Minto, but for the society she collected at her house, "Genoa would have been unsupportable. I have often admired, as indeed all the world does, that power of making something out of nothing—society out of solitude." A few weeks after this letter was received, a slight swelling appeared on Mr. Berry's hand, which spread to the arm, and

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was pronounced gangrenous. In five days he died, and was buried in the cemetery at Carignano. "His death," writes his daughter, "leaves us without a duty to fulfil towards the present generation, nor have we any tie to that which is to come."

In 1819 Miss Berry published her "Life and Letters of Lady Russell," for writing which her friendship for Lord John Russell and other members of the Bedford family had afforded her unusual facilities. The subject suited her admirably, and it was certainly the most successful of her literary efforts.

In Madame Lenormant's Memoirs of Madame Récamier she mentions Miss Berry—"an Englishwoman, no longer young, but still beautiful and *spirituelle*," very amusing, unaffected, and kind, with a great flow of spirits—as a frequent visitor at the Abbaye-aux-Bois in this year. One evening finding Madame Récamier and her niece alone, she began to tell them of an adventure which had happened to her that day. About four o'clock, in the January twilight, she was calling on Lady Charles Stuart, wife of the English Ambassador, and they sat talking by firelight. Lady Charles was expecting a governess who had been recommended to her. The door opened, a name was

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muttered by an English servant, and a woman of middle height, rather stout, and plainly dressed, stole quietly in. Lady Charles motioned her to a chair, and began politely to question her. The lady perceived that there was some mistake, and, to put an end to it, observed, to Miss Berry's amusement and Lady Charles's confusion, "It is extremely cold; the King, my husband, tells me" —Miss Berry had arrived at this point in her story when the door opened, and a short, stout lady approached. Not noticing the new arrival, she said laughingly, "Do you understand? It was the Queen of Sweden whom she took for the governess!" "For mercy's sake be quiet!" cried Madame Récamier, "here is the Queen herself!" And Miss Berry, looking up, found herself again in the presence of the heroine of Lady Charles's mistake.

Miss Berry was in Paris again in 1820, and present at a masked ball attended by the Duc and Duchesse de Berri, within twenty-four hours of the Duke's assassination. And she was in the Chamber during the examination of the assassin, when one of the deputies melodramatically denounced the Comte Decazes as "accomplice du meurtre de M. le Duc de Berri!" Her description of the horrible scene at the Opera House, with all

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its incongruous surroundings, is the fullest and most graphic to be found anywhere.

From Paris the sisters wandered over the Continent, glad to prolong their absence from England during the miserable business of the Queen's trial. They avoided Naples, where there were rumours of political disturbance ("during which," Miss Berry remarks, with one of her rare touches of humour, "old women have nothing to do but to be kicked down and not picked up again"), and in Rome found—amongst a mob of princes and ex-princes—their old acquaintance, Madame D'Albany,* "not unentertaining; well-informed, sensible, sharp, and heartless—very different from what we knew her many years ago, in Alfieri's time," and Napoleon's sister Pauline:

"She occupies a fine apartment in the Borghese Palace. A pretty person, no longer young, but still preserves her looks, giving herself as much the airs of a princess as she can venture to do—rising a very little when any one enters, &c. Several Roman ladies there, and about twenty gentlemen. We had music; I was at her side on the sofa: we talked a great deal of all those of her admirers who were my friends."

This visit to the Bonaparte beauty in Rome was soon followed by a quiet day at Neuilly, where Miss Berry was delighted with the children of the future King of the French: "One cannot see a

* Wife of Prince Charles Edward.

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finer family, nor one better brought up, or more at ease with their parents."

In 1828 Miss Berry published her "Comparative View of Social Life in France and England," which had occupied her for some years, and had been the chief object of many of her visits to France. It was painstaking and anecdotal, but does not appear to have been cordially received even by the author's friends. She bore their strictures with a patience truly admirable, when one remembers her exceeding sensitiveness and intellectual pride. In spite of all her social successes, she was not a happy woman. Her life was shadowed by the consciousness that she had never found full expression for the powers of her mind, or outlet for the affections of her heart; and in her diaries she often recurs with touching fidelity to the one great disappointment of her youth.

The sisters were at St. Germain during the Revolution of 1830, and Agnes Berry's very interesting journal gives a vivid picture of the time. So far as their neighbourhood was concerned, the excitement was wonderfully well regulated and good-tempered, the National Guard even emptying casks of wine on the ground lest too much should be drunk. Things were different

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in Paris, which was "converted into a camp," and where "the *élégans* of the *salons*, when making their bow to the ladies, inquired, '*Quels seront vos projets pendant les massacres?*'"

Four years later, Miss Berry visited her Orleans friends at Fontainebleau; the King and Queen themselves took her over the château, and she saw Marie Amélie's rooms, filled with furniture which formerly belonged to Marie Antoinette, and Louis Philippe using the table on which Napoleon had signed his abdication. Ominous, these things, of the insecurity of dynasties in France! Yet Miss Berry, somewhat misled, perhaps, by her own affection for the family, wrote to Macaulay that she saw popularity dawning for Louis Philippe.

When seventy-four years old, she paid a final visit to Paris, which, she said, was her "last reckoning with society. . . . It is now that I figure Petersham, and our quiet garden there, as everything on earth that I most covet, and from which I no longer desire to wander." And when she had returned to that pleasant spot, she wrote:

"Here I am quiet without being lonely; here I need never be idle—nor ever be hurried; here I can read as long as my eyes last, and work in my garden as long as my strength lasts,* alternately one with the other, while both

* Sydney Smith affected to disbelieve in her rural tastes. "The rumour of the town," he wrote, "is that you are tired to death of

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contribute to assure me what must be considered one of the enjoyments of old age—sleep."

Her friends, however, would by no means consent to let her slip out of society, and Joanna Baillie, between whom and the Berrys there had long been a warm attachment, writes:

"I do not wonder that people should forget your age; in company you seem to have spirit and vigour for anything, and it is not your uttering a complaint or two of being old, and other ailments, that will convince them while your face is so animated, and your eyes nearly as bright as they were twenty years ago."

During a visit to Lord and Lady Lansdowne at Bowood, Miss Berry saw much of Moore, and he records in his diary that she reminded him of her having been present when he made his first appearance as a singer before a large company; of the sort of contemptuous titter which went round the circle of fine gentlemen amateurs when the little Irish lad was led forward to exhibit before them; and of the change in their countenances when they saw the effect he produced.

"I didn't so much like you in those days," she

the country, and never mean to try it again. That you bought a rake and attempted to rake the flower-beds, and did it so badly that you pulled up all the flowers. That it is impossible to get into the Lindsay"—Lady Charlotte, who had lived with the Berrys for many years—"the smallest acquaintance with the vegetable world, and that if it was not for the interference of friends she would order the roses to be boiled for dinner, and gather a cauliflower as a nosegay."—"Sydney Smith," by Lady Holland. Page 538. Edit. 1869.

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said to him. "You were too—too—what shall I say?"

"Too brisk and airy, perhaps?" suggested Moore.

"Yes," she replied, taking hold of one of his "grizzly locks;" "I like you better since you have got these."

"I could then overhear her," adds Moore—whose hearing for praise was always acute—"say to the person with whom I had found her speaking, 'That's as good a creature as ever lived!'"*

Some reference to the Berrys is to be found in nearly all the memoirs and correspondence of the first half of this century. The two sisters, relics of a long past generation, with memories which had became historical, generally excited respectful sympathy. Strangely enough, the least kind mention of them is contained in one of the letters of Baroness Bunsen, usually so remarkable for tenderness and charity:

"The Miss Berrys were at the concerts, and each time happened to sit close to me, therefore I had a full opportunity of observing their behaviour and hearing their conversation. In the fine and fashionable dress—the toques and the caps, the satin, the gauze, and the blonde in which they were always attired, it is out of my power to recognize

* "Memoirs of Thomas Moore," vol. vii. pp. 241, 293.

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the little woman whom we saw one morning at Mrs. W. Lock's. But I observe that the Miss Berry who looks by far the youngest,* and is the tallest, with a very good and youthful figure, is the person who has the harsh voice, the dictatorial tone, and the keen black eyes. The other Miss Berry looks much milder, is quieter in her manner, and speaks neither so much nor so loud. The first-mentioned attacked Charles at one of the concerts (for her speaking to anybody has the appearance of an attack) to ask the very *learned* question whether Palestrina had not lived *just before* Marcello. Baron Stein mentioned the Miss Berrys to Charles in this manner, 'There is an old woman who goes about Rome with a younger sister of sixty or seventy years of age. She is always talking of Horace Walpole. I have given her to understand that I despise the man, but nothing can keep her quiet on the subject!'" †

These strictures on Miss Berry's manner were no doubt deserved, but had Madame Bunsen known how painfully conscious of its defects she was herself, it might have excited sympathy rather than censure. In 1807 she wrote in her diary:

"A number of little circumstances have lately served to convince me that my manner is often *tranchante*, my voice too loud, and my way of meeting opposition unconciliating. All these circumstances are exactly the contrary of what they ought to be, to make me what I wish at my time of life. It is odd that I, who have been always thinking of growing old, and have such clear ideas of what alone can make a woman loved and amiable after her youth is past, should fall into the very faults I am most aware of, and put

* The Baroness is evidently describing Mary Berry, who was really the elder sister, though only by a year.

† "Life and Letters of Baroness Bunsen," by Augustus J. C. Hare. Vol. i. p. 176. 1882.

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myself into the situation I have always deprecated. But it is not too late, and at least I am not too old to mend."

What a contrast to Madame Bunsen's comments is the spirit in which the "cynic" Thackeray mentions the sisters to Mrs. Brookfield! In one passage he says he is glad that he has been able to please them by some allusion in *Punch*. In another letter he writes:

"What numbers of good folks there are in the world! . . . Old Miss Berry is very kind too—nothing can be kinder. . . . I hope you will like good old Miss Agnes Berry; I am sure you will, and shall be glad that you belong to that kind and polite set of old ladies and worthy gentlemen."

Miss Kate Perry, another of the fortunate recipients of Thackeray's affectionate letters and humorous sketches, says, describing her first acquaintance with him:

"Afterwards we frequently met at the Miss Berrys', where night after night were assembled all the wit and beauty of that time. There was such a charm about these gatherings of friends that hereafter we may say, 'There is no salon now to compare to that of the Miss Berrys in Curzon Street.' My sister and I, with our great admiration and friendship for Mr. Thackeray, used to think that the Miss Berrys at first did not thoroughly appreciate or understand him; but one evening, when he had left early, they said they had perceived for the first time 'what a very remarkable man he was.' He became a constant and most welcome visitor at their house; they read his works with delight, and whenever they were making up a pleasant dinner, used to

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say, 'We *must* have Thackeray.' . . . Miss Agnes Berry adored her elder sister; she had considerable clearness and acuteness of perception, and Thackeray always maintained she was the more naturally gifted of the two sisters. In her youth she was a pretty, charming girl, with whom Gustavus Adolphus danced at a Court ball." *

Mary Berry was always anxious to give her friends a high opinion of her sister's talents, but Lord Houghton at all events did not share it:

"Agnes," he says, "it is clear, would have been nothing above an amiable, cheery, pretty woman, but for Mary's superiority; yet it is undeniable that her liveliness was a most necessary complement to Miss Berry's graver disposition, and that it was hard to say which was the greater gainer by the faculties of the other. During an illness in which Mary was supposed to be seriously attacked, I was present when Mr. Rogers came to see her, not having visited the house for many years previous. She received him with great kindness, but after some strong expressions of sympathy, Agnes, bearing no longer what she, I think wrongly, believed to be a false and barren exhibition of feeling, burst out, 'You might have been, and you were not, anything to us when we were living, and you now come and insult us with your civilities when we are well-nigh dead!' This was a specimen of the more passionate and, it may be, one-sided nature, which Agnes never concealed, and which time did not subdue." †

During the last ten years of the sisters' lives, their brilliant circle necessarily somewhat contracted, and their correspondence decreased. But

* *Scribner's Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 329. 1887.

† "Monographs, Personal and Social," by Lord Houghton. Murray, 1873. Page 219.

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both were exceptionally attractive to the last. Few women of eighty could hope to deserve such a tribute as this from such a man as Lord Jeffrey :

"I have just been reading your admirable letter for the third time, and after nourishing the meditations to which it led by gazing for half an hour on the long waves which come glittering in the moonlight to the beach below my windows, and listening to the soft and solemn roar they send up to the silent stars, I find I cannot lay myself down with a quiet conscience till I have thanked you for the pleasure it has given, *and the good it has done me.* Never was wisdom so gentle, or magnanimity so simple and modest."

Sydney Smith still cheered them with clever nonsense, and Lady Dufferin with her graceful sparkle. And Lady Morley, in one of her amusing letters, says :

"I infer that you are pretty flourishing, as you only refer to your *eighty-sixth ailment*" [Miss Berry's age] "which I hold to be a very light matter, and to you above all people, with your ears and your eyes, and your limbs and your mind, and your zest and your capabilities of enjoyment all alive and kicking, as if you were eighteen instead of eighty-five! . . . You have no business to say ill-natured things of old age. It is an evil or a good (like most things) according as we take it : but it is scarcely an evil to you, and it shall not be an evil to me, if, please God, I live two or three years longer, and have no painful disease to prevent my enjoying and making the best of it."

Miss Martineau, who knew the sisters well, said of them : "These ladies brought into our time a good deal of the manners, the conversation,

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and the dress of the last century. But not at all in a way to cast any restraint on the youngest of their visitors, or to check the inclination to inquire into the thoughts and ways of men long dead, and the influence of modes long passed away." Mary Berry, she says, "seemed to notice everything, and to forget nothing."

In 1849 Lady Charlotte Lindsay, the "third sister" of half a century of closest companionship, was taken from the little circle. Mary Berry felt a growing conviction that she would soon follow.

"I still make an effort to gather together some sparks of life for my sister's sake," she wrote. "My only anxiety! my *only* one! is thinking what I can do to secure her some comfort of society after I am gone. I think of this without ceasing."

The anxiety was needless. January, 1852, saw Agnes Berry's most calm and peaceful death; and in November, Mary, then ninety years old, "without a struggle, with scarcely a sigh," followed. In Miss Martineau's obituary notice of her, she says—

"Miss Berry was remarkable enough in herself to have excited a great deal of emotion by dying any time within the last seventy years. Dying now, she leaves as strong as ever the impression of her admirable faculties, her generous and affectionate nature, and her high accomplishments. She was not only the woman of letters of the last century carried forward into our own; she was not only the woman

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of fashion, who was familiar with the gaieties of life before the fair daughters of George the Third were seen abroad, and who had her own will and way with society up to last Saturday night; she was the repository of the whole literary history of the last fourscore years; and when she was pleased to throw open the folding-doors of her memory, they were found to be mirrors, and in them was seen the whole procession of literature, from the mournful Cowper to Tennyson the Laureate. It was said that Miss Berry's parties were rather blue, but all thought of contemporary pedantry disappeared before her stories of how she once found on the table, on her return from a ball, a volume of 'Plays on the Passions,'* and how she knelt on a chair by the table to see what the book was like, and was found there—feathers and satin shoes and all—by the servant who came to let in the winter morning light: or of how the world of literature was perplexed and distressed, as a hive of bees that has lost its queen, when Dr. Johnson died; or how Charles Fox used to wonder that people could make such a fuss about that dullest of new books—Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations.'" †

Mary Berry was laid beside her sister, at Petersham, in the beautiful, quiet riverside churchyard, with its shadowing trees and many flowers, to which in life her eyes had often turned wistfully, as to a haven of rest.

Dean Milman read the funeral service over both his dear friends; Lord Houghton was amongst the mourners, and a quotation from his memorial stanzas may fitly close this selection from the records of two lives, remarkable for their long and

* By Joanna Baillie. † *Daily News*, Nov. 29, 1852.

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unbroken association with all that was best in English society and finest in English intellect:

"Two friends within one grave we place
United in our tears,
Sisters, scarce parted for the space
Of more than eighty years.
And she whose bier is borne to-day,
The one the last to go,
Bears with her thoughts that force their way
Above the moment's woe—
Thoughts of the varied human life
Spread o'er that field of time—
The toil, the passion, and the strife,
The virtue and the crime.
Yet 'mid this long tumultuous scene,
The image on our mind
Of these dear women rests serene,
In happy bounds confined.
Within one undisturbed abode,
Their presence seems to dwell,
From which continual pleasures flowed,
And countless graces fell.

* * * * *

Where none were sad, and few were dull,
And each one said his best,
And beauty was most beautiful,
With vanity at rest.
No taunt or scoff obscured the wit
That there rejoiced to reign,
*They* never could have laughed at it
If it had carried pain.
There needless scandal, e'en though true,
Provoked no bitter smile,
And even men of fashion grew
Benignant for a while.



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Not that there lacked the nervous scorn
At every public wrong;
Not that a friend was left forlorn
When victim of the strong.
Free words, expressing generous blood,
No nice punctilio weighed,
For deep and earnest womanhood
Their reason underlaid.
As generations onward came
They loved from all to win
Revival of the sacred flame
That glowed their hearts within.
While others in Time's greedy mesh
The faded garlands flung,
Their hearts went out and gathered fresh
Affections from the young.

* * * * *

Farewell! the pleasant social page
Is read,—but ye remain
Examples of ennobled age,
Long life without a stain.
A lesson to be scorned by none,
Least by the wise and brave,
Delightful as the winter sun
That gilds this open grave."

END OF VOL. I.

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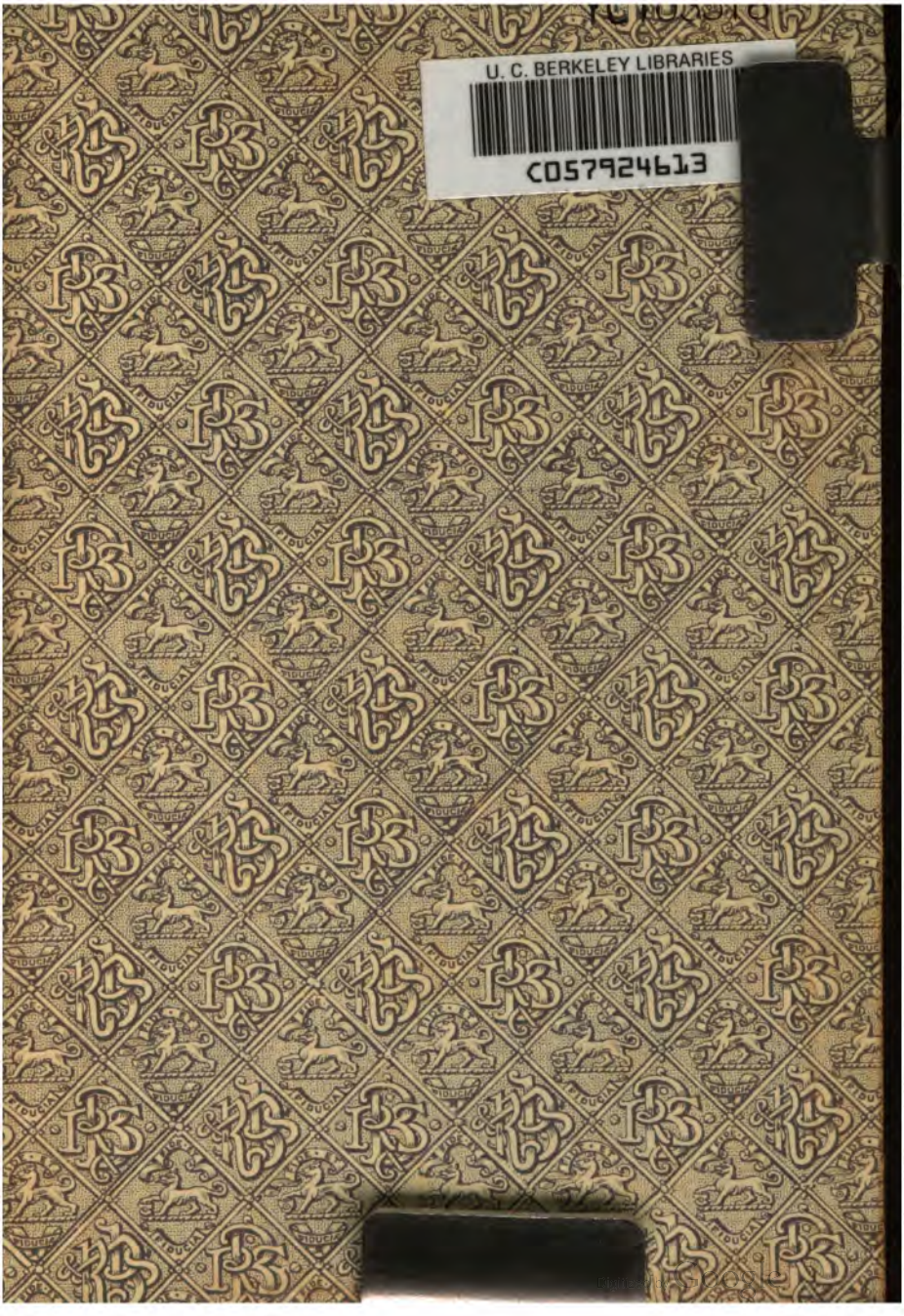
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